

# Chapter 10

## George Worgan and the Macarthurs

Every Australian child is taught that the Macarthurs created the Australian sheep industry—an industry that became the backbone of the new colony’s—and eventually, for a while at least, the nation’s—wealth. It is not commonly taught, however, that the Macarthurs were closely connected with George Worgan and the First Fleet piano.

Following Worgan’s arrival at Sydney Cove, his piano probably stayed with him (wherever his accommodation was) until about January 1791, at which time he placed the instrument into the care of Elizabeth Macarthur.

## Elizabeth Macarthur

Elizabeth Macarthur was born Elizabeth Veale in the town of Bridgerule in Devon, England, on Thursday, 14 August 1766. Her father, Richard Veale, was ‘a yeoman farmer who owned *Lodgeworthy*, a mixed-farm of some 94 acres in Bridgerule near Kilkhampton’.<sup>1</sup> After the death of her father, and her mother’s remarriage, Elizabeth went to live with her maternal grandfather,<sup>2</sup> John Hatherley, when she was six years old. ‘Soon afterwards she was taken into the home of the Reverend John Kingdon’, the vicar of Bridgerule, a master of arts and fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, where, as a ‘charity child’, ‘she had a simple, quiet, moral upbringing in the household of a minor country parson’.<sup>3</sup>

Within this context she was educated along with the Reverend Kingdon’s daughter Bridget. Bridget Kingdon, ‘who had brothers but no sister close to her in age’,<sup>4</sup> ‘became a lifelong friend and correspondent’.<sup>5</sup>

Taking a poor relation or a ‘charity child’ into one’s home, to act as unpaid companion to an ailing wife or daughter, was a relatively common practice in Georgian England ...

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1 R. C. R. Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance: Individual Responses to Colonial Life*, PhD dissertation (The University of Sydney, 2006), p. 16.

2 Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 20.

3 ‘Elizabeth Farm: John and Elizabeth Macarthur’, in *Historic Houses Trust: Discover Elizabeth Farm* (n.d.).

4 H. King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980), p. 4.

5 N. Kennedy, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850): The First Educated Lady to Set Foot in Australia’, in *Brand Lady.com: Empowering Women the World Over* (5 March 2009).

Elizabeth was luckier than most charity children, because the Reverend John Kingdon treated her as though she was his own daughter ... In return for being a companion to Bridget, young Elizabeth received an excellent education at a time when most 'genteel' girls were only taught reading, writing, sewing and needlework, plus a smattering of French and arithmetic.

Elizabeth Veale was taught Latin and Greek, studied ancient and modern history, geography, natural history and elementary French.<sup>6</sup>

## John Macarthur

When John Macarthur first met Elizabeth, he was a young 'ensign from a disbanded Corps of Foot',<sup>7</sup> on half-pay.

As one of fourteen children of a Plymouth mercer and draper he had few prospects, no fortune, and only his own sense of superiority to support him while endeavouring, in the five years after the American War of Independence, to obtain another military post.

Spending the years between the ages of sixteen and twenty one in seclusion in rural Devon, he probably felt cheated of the opportunities which may have presented themselves to him had the American war continued.<sup>8</sup>

According to his fourth son, James (1798–1867), during the five years when John Macarthur was on half-pay, 'he spent his days riding and hunting, studying history and contemplating a legal career'. It seems that during this time 'he acquired his knowledge of farming'.<sup>9</sup>

John earned extra money by tutoring at Kilkhampton Grammar School, 13 kilometres from Bridgerule, in Cornwall; that he possessed the necessary knowledge was the outcome of the education he had received at a private school.<sup>10</sup> As a tutor at Kilkhampton Grammar School, John Macarthur became friends with the Reverend John Kingdon's son Thomas. It is probable that through this

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6 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, pp. 50–1.

7 Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 5.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

9 J. N. Hughes, *The Macarthurs: A Brief Family History* (Glebe, NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1984), p. 2.

10 See Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 40.

contact he met Elizabeth, who was a pupil at the grammar school.<sup>11</sup> ‘Elizabeth ... lost her virginity to the young officer who was awaiting a transfer to Gibraltar. We do not know Elizabeth’s reactions when she found herself pregnant.’<sup>12</sup>

Until 1753, a promise to marry was traditionally regarded as being as binding as a marriage, and on the strength of it, a couple could be compelled to have the promise sanctified by a minister of religion.<sup>13</sup> The town of Bridgerule was isolated and provincial; changes in the law in 1753 regarding marriage may not have had much impact on traditional understandings and practices. If John and Elizabeth had promised marriage to one another, they would probably have regarded themselves as being married months before their actual marriage ceremony took place. That Elizabeth became pregnant prior to the marriage ceremony was probably not scandalous in Bridgerule. ‘Many marriages started out with the bride well advanced in pregnancy and with as good a chance of a reasonably happy union as any couple can hope for nowadays—probably better.’<sup>14</sup>

There is no doubt that Elizabeth loved John ‘very deeply, as the whole of the rest of her life was to testify’<sup>15</sup> (Elizabeth was to enjoy 46 years of marriage, even though she ‘was pitied for her husband’s inappropriate behaviour within the colony [at Sydney Cove], from the time of their arrival’).<sup>16</sup>

John Macarthur’s widowed father would not have been impressed by the fact that his penniless son wanted to marry a girl who lacked a dowry ...

Elizabeth’s mother was far from enthusiastic about her daughter’s marriage to ... [a] junior officer with big pretensions and a low income ... Elizabeth later admitted that her mother had claimed that, ‘Mr Macarthur is too haughty and arrogant’ ...

Although Elizabeth’s situation looked difficult, the Reverend Kingdon clearly approved of their relationship as, a few months before the Macarthurs’ wedding, he asked John and Elizabeth to act as godparents to his baby daughter ...

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11 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 52.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

13 See W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 16th edn, 4 vols (London: A. Strahan, 1825), Vol. 1, p. 438.

14 T. Adams, ‘The Ongoing Joys of Family Research: Hangings, Divorce, Lunacy and Death by London Bus’, in *The Cornwall Family History Society*, No. 141 (September) (Truro, Cornwall: The Cornwall Family History Society, 2011), p. 11.

15 King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 8.

16 Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 29. See D. Walsh, *The Admiral’s Wife* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1967), pp. 130–2.

On [Monday] 6 October 1788 [five months after the First Fleet departed for Botany Bay] ... Elizabeth Veale and John Macarthur ... were married at the Anglican church at Bridgerule by Reverend John Kingdon.<sup>17</sup>

A few months before their marriage, John Macarthur 'secured ... full pay ... by joining the 68th Regiment, stationed in Gibraltar, still an ensign at twenty one as he had been at fifteen'.<sup>18</sup>

Macarthur did not join his regiment in Gibraltar, but—determined to enhance his rank and prospects—in June 1789 'transferred as a lieutenant' to the 102nd Regiment, the newly created NSW Corps, 'then being enlisted for duty at Botany Bay',<sup>19</sup> on an annual salary of £79.<sup>20</sup>

Joseph Holt, the Irish political convict, was probably not far wide of the truth when he wrote, from personal knowledge of early New South Wales, that soldiers from the military prison known as the Savoy, and other characters no less unsavoury, 'who have been considered as disgraceful to every other regiment in His Majesty's Service', were thought suitable persons for this corps.<sup>21</sup>

The NSW Corps was established to replace Governor Phillip's marines at Port Jackson, and 'there was no dearth of young men anxious to join a regiment in which, if there were no prospects of military action, there seemed to be excellent opportunities for promotion and aggrandizement'.<sup>22</sup>

## The Macarthurs Sail to Sydney Cove with the Second Fleet

On Sunday, 17 January 1790, John Macarthur, his wife, Elizabeth, their first son, Edward (1789–1872; who, having been born on Wednesday 18 March 1789 at Bath,<sup>23</sup> was eight months old at the time), and a servant girl left England for Sydney Cove on board the *Neptune* with the notorious Second Fleet. The Macarthurs' son Edward 'is believed to be the only person who sailed in the Second Fleet of whom we have a photograph. He was probably also the last survivor of the voyage.'<sup>24</sup>

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17 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, pp. 54–5.

18 Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 8.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

20 See Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 26.

21 Wannan, *Early Colonial Scandals*, p. 42.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

23 Hughes, *The Macarthurs*, p. 4.

24 'Second Fleet (Australia)', in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (n.d.).

It was a miserable time for the Macarthurs who were bundled into quarters on the lower deck that had been divided into two parts. One side for Macarthurs and the other crammed with women convicts. It was an extremely disagreeable situation, not only because of the stink and bad language of the convict women, but a narrow passageway was the only way to reach the open deck above.

The Captain of the ship in a fit of malice after an argument with John Macarthur turned this passageway into a sick bay so it was necessary then for the family to step over the filth and vomit of dying convicts in order to reach the fresh air. Elizabeth refused to leave her cabin and after many days confined therein John demanded that his family be transferred to another of the ships in the fleet while they were becalmed in the doldrums. On the 19th February 1790 they were shifted over to the *Scarborough* and although they could not stand upright in the small cabin they had been allotted, at least they could enjoy fresh air on deck.

As the voyage was nearing its end Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter. Unfortunately the baby only lived for about an hour and was buried at sea.<sup>25</sup>

Overwhelmed by her context, Elizabeth 'had no reserves of sympathy left for the starving, vermin-infested, brutally treated convicts'.<sup>26</sup> The Macarthurs arrived at Sydney Cove on Monday, 28 June 1790. John Macarthur was 22 years old.

## What Did John and Elizabeth Macarthur Look Like?

### Two Authenticated Portraits

Two authenticated portraits of John and Elizabeth Macarthur exist (Plates 66 and 67).<sup>27</sup> The portrait of John Macarthur is a copy (dating from about the 1850s) of an authenticated miniature held in a private collection.

25 Kennedy, 'Elizabeth Macarthur'. Of the Macarthurs' 'nine children, seven survived infancy and only two ever had children of their own ... [The Macarthur] family would never be gathered together at one time. [The Macarthurs' eldest son,] Edward left the colony at the age of eight, returning to NSW only for two brief visits during his parents' lifetime, while Macarthur's second son John, who departed the colony at the age of seven, in 1801, was never again seen by his mother.' Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 36.

26 Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 21.

27 These are housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, as part of the Dixson Collection.



**Plate 66 Unknown artist: *John Macarthur* (n.d., ca 1850s). Authenticated portrait. Oil on canvas; 125 x 100 centimetres.**

Source: Reproduced with permission of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.



**Plate 67 Unknown artist: *Elizabeth Macarthur* (n.d., ca 1850s). Authenticated portrait. Oil on canvas; 90 x 70.5 centimetres.**

Source: Reproduced with permission of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.



**Plate 68 Unknown artist: *John Macarthur* (?) (n.d.). Unauthenticated portrait.**

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Reproduced by permission of Stewart Symonds. Photo by the author.





**Plate 69 Unknown artist: *Elizabeth Macarthur* (?) (n.d.). Unauthenticated portrait.**

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Reproduced by permission of Stewart Symonds. Photo by the author.

The portrait of Elizabeth Macarthur shows her to have been a woman of striking beauty and refined taste in both dress and deportment.<sup>28</sup> That Elizabeth should be portrayed thus is (in large part) due to the fact that social positioning was associated with

the self-presentation of the individual. Self-presentation was a matter of manners, deportment, dress and general care of the person, as well as the style of speech, the use or absence of a dialect, the degree and type of education and the display of it. Finally, it was a matter of the degree of social ease in culturally-defining situations.<sup>29</sup>

## Two Unauthenticated Portraits

There is contention in relation to the identity of the personages represented in two contemporaneous portraits (Plates 68 and 69).<sup>30</sup> The owner of the portraits believes them to be representations of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The two portraits appear to have been painted by the same (unknown) artist, possibly at the same time (such pairs of portraits were commonly painted either to commemorate or in association with a significant event). Perhaps these two paintings were completed prior to John Macarthur's departure on 29 March 1809 for England on board the *Admiral Gambier*.

Comparison between the authenticated and unauthenticated sets of portraits reveals striking similarities in

1. the nose
2. the shape and colour of the eyes
3. the shape of the mouth.

Certain similarities between the authenticated and unauthenticated sets of portraits are particularly obvious"

1. In relation to John Macarthur, the
  - a) hairline
  - b) keen, penetrating eyes
  - c) pugnacious mouth

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28 See J. Conway, 'Macarthur, Elizabeth (1766–1850)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.

29 Jordan, *The Convict Theatres of Early Australia 1788–1840*, p. 90.

30 These portraits are owned by Stewart Symonds, Ermington, Sydney, NSW.

- d) firm, squared jaw
  - e) prominent ear lobes.
2. In relation to Elizabeth Macarthur, the
- a) high forehead
  - b) height of the eyebrows
  - c) corners of the mouth
  - d) prominent chin
  - e) long neck
  - f) slope of the shoulders.

Both sets of portraits speak of vigour, wealth and self-confidence.

Some experts in Australian art history have not accepted the unauthenticated portraits as being representations of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, denouncing the works as unimportant—a state of affairs analogous with that revealed in the documentary film *Who the #\$% is Jackson Pollock?*<sup>31</sup>

## The Macarthurs at Sydney Cove

Upon disembarkation at Sydney Cove, Elizabeth Macarthur thought the colony to be ‘completely wretched’.<sup>32</sup>

The filthy ships in the Cove, the rude lines of sodden barracks, the ... tents that held the sick sagging in the downpour along the waterfront; the night fires in the region of the Rocks, a sink of evil already and more like a gypsy encampment than part of a town ... the stumps and fallen trees, and the boggy tracks wending their way around rock and precipice; the oozy Tank Stream spreading itself over the sand by the head of the Cove.<sup>33</sup>

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31 Moses, H. (dir.), *Who the #\$% is Jackson Pollock?*, [Film], Produced by D. Hewitt, S. Hewitt and M. Lynne, Starring T. Horton (Distributed by Warner Bros, 2006). ‘After semi-truck driver Teri Horton bought a large splatter painting for her friend for \$5, she was forced to sell it in her own garage sale when her friend said she had no place for it. Eventually someone commented on the painting stating it might be an original Jackson Pollock ... [The] documentary follows Teri, her son, and a forensics specialist as they attempt to prove to the world, or more specifically the art community, her painting is a true Jackson Pollock.’ ‘Synopsis of the Movie’.

32 Birmingham, *Leviathan*, p. 164.

33 Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 164–5.

Elizabeth Macarthur was 'the second woman of her [social] class to go to ... [Sydney Cove]. The first was probably the ["somewhat tart-tongued"]<sup>34</sup> wife of the Reverend Richard Johnson, although almost nothing is known of her.'<sup>35</sup> (The Reverend Johnson's wife 'bore him a daughter whom he called by an Aboriginal name, Milbah, born in 1790, and a son, born in 1792'.)<sup>36</sup>

## Initial Accommodation

If Elizabeth Macarthur had anticipated comfortable accommodation when she disembarked, her hopes would soon have been dashed upon the rocks of disappointment. Sometime 'after disembarking'—that is, after Monday, 28 June 1790—the Macarthurs were given a hut vacated by an officer who was being transferred to Norfolk Island'.<sup>37</sup> 'The hut was on the west side of the Tank Stream, with the parade ground and the settlement's storehouses between them and the convicts.'<sup>38</sup> De Vries locates the Macarthurs' hut 'along George Street (then known as Spring Row)'.<sup>39</sup>

Instead of glass, the windows of the hut would have had a lattice of twigs. The outline of the hut 'might have been drawn by a child; [a] simple square [building] ... about nine feet by twelve [2.7 metres by 3.6 metres] with a central door on one side and a window each side of it'.<sup>40</sup> A letter written by a distressed female convict describes the type of hut as 'the most miserable huts you can possibly conceive of ... Windows they have none ... so that lattices of twigs are made by our people to supply their places'.<sup>41</sup> (Convict women were not all illiterate; 'over a quarter of the women who arrived on the First Fleet and who married within the next two years were able to write their names in the marriage register'.)<sup>42</sup> Sanitation was of the most primitive kind.

During this time, Elizabeth Macarthur writes that there was 'no female friend to unbend my mind to, nor a single woman with whom I could converse with any satisfaction to myself'.<sup>43</sup> On the nights when John Macarthur 'was duty

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34 Wannan, *Early Colonial Scandals*, p. 30.

35 Duffy, *Man of Honour*, pp. 25–6.

36 K. J. Cable, 'Johnson, Richard (1753?–1827)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.

37 Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 61.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 61–2.

39 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, pp. 61–2.

40 Parker, *Arthur Phillip*, p. 134.

41 'Letter Written by a Convict Woman, 14 November 1788', in F. M. Bladen (ed.), *Historical Records of New South Wales* (Sydney: Charles Potter, Government Printer, 1893), Vol. 2, p. 747.

42 B. Penglase, '1788: That Illiterate 'freight of misery'?', in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 75, Part 2 (October 1989). Quoted in Clarke, 'Life Lines'.

43 Quoted in de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 62. Also quoted in King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 17.

officer, he had to stay in the Military Barracks and Elizabeth was left alone in her shack',<sup>44</sup> keeping company with the ever-present spiders, ants and insects. Sydney Cove was no place for a nervous lady. In a letter to her mother dated Friday, 18 November 1791, 'Elizabeth remarks that during this period she keenly felt "the want of female society"'.<sup>45</sup> Gentlewomen did not look to female servants for company. Servants were not considered proper companions. Even in the isolation of colonial life, gentlewomen distanced themselves from the servant class; gentlewomen 'could not regard domestic servants as their equals and their notions of gentility held strongly over their longing for female company'.<sup>46</sup>

## Elizabeth Macarthur Seeks Company

'As the only officers' wife in the colony',<sup>47</sup> Elizabeth sought the company 'of the marines officers, presumably the better behaved'.<sup>48</sup>

The officers were a mixed lot, varying from the suave, polished ... [Captain] John Piper to the blustering Anthony Fenn Kemp [1773–1868], said to have been a pawnbroker, and who was 'qualified for any huxtering or dealing.' Many joined [the NSW Corps] with the deliberate intention of making what money they could out of their overseas service.<sup>49</sup>

We know that the officers were generally friendly and polite.<sup>50</sup> From within this group of officers, Elizabeth formed close friendships with 'the perceptive author Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench', whom she visited almost every day, 'and the amateur astronomer and anthropologist Lieutenant William Dawes'.<sup>51</sup>

William Dawes was a man of many talents. A patron of Dawes described some of his abilities: 'He understands the Spanish and Portuguese languages, as also French and Italian; he has studied botany some considerable time together, with mineralogy; he is a tolerable good astronomer and draws very well.'<sup>52</sup> In 1792, William Dawes

went to Sierra Leone ... as advisor to the Governor, and he ... took over that post later the same year. In 1793 ... he became mathematics master

44 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 60.

45 E. Macarthur, 'Letter to Her Mother, 18 November 1791', in *Macarthur Papers 12* (Sydney: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales). Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 266.

46 Dömötör, *Gentlewomen in the Bush*, p. 104.

47 Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 62.

48 Ibid.

49 Wannan, *Early Colonial Scandals*, p. 42.

50 See M. A. Parker, *A Voyage Round the World in the Gorgon Man of War, Captain John Parker, Performed and Written by His Widow; For the Advantage of a Numerous Family* (London: John Nichols, 1795), p. 92.

51 Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 63.

52 See Frost, *The First Fleet*, p. 62.

at Christ's Hospital and helped to train missionaries for the Church Missionary Society. In 1813 he went to Antigua as a correspondent of the Church Missionary Society, established schools for the children of slaves and travelled to Dominica and St Vincent. He died in Antigua in 1836.<sup>53</sup>

Dawes may well have been impressed by Elizabeth Macarthur's intelligence, curiosity and the fact that she was a well-educated woman. Not only did he show 'her stars and constellations unknown in the northern hemisphere',<sup>54</sup> but he also taught the curious Elizabeth 'about botany and exotic flora and fauna'.<sup>55</sup>

Elizabeth was hungry for knowledge. She wrote to her friend Bridget Kingdon: 'I have arrived so far as to be able to class and order all common plants. I have found great pleasure in my study; every walk furnished me with subjects to put in practice that theory I had before gained by reading.'<sup>56</sup> Dawes may have 'told the young wide-eyed Mrs Macarthur about the unusual [antipodean] cycle of the seasons [and of] ... kangaroos,<sup>57</sup> koalas and platypuses'.<sup>58</sup>

Elizabeth's socially isolated context and her desire for stimulating company were probably the catalysts that resulted in her first meeting with surgeon George Worgan and his piano. It is not known when Elizabeth became aware that Worgan had brought his piano with him to Sydney Cove; perhaps it was during her first conversation with him (Worgan may even have been introduced to Elizabeth specifically as the owner of the colony's only piano). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century social world, 'introductions between strangers tend[ed] to be formal, predictable affairs'. The parties greeted and acknowledged one another 'according to accepted rules. In this nicely regulated verbal world every antecedent phrase [had its] ... consequent'.<sup>59</sup> 'Choices about one's friends [and] ... patterns of speech and gesture ... were ... fraught with significance ... women's friendships and appearances in public were believed to reveal insights into their moral character.'<sup>60</sup> Depending on the nature of George Worgan's initial discourse with Elizabeth Macarthur (as well as the context within which the conversation took place), the introduction of the subject of his piano may even have represented a violation of social decorum. Perhaps the subject of Worgan's piano was not raised until a subsequent meeting, at which time the two new friends sought to become better acquainted with one another.

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53 Parker, *Arthur Phillip*, p. 275.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

56 Quoted in King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 17.

57 'Captain John Shea [d. 1789] seems to have been the first man to shoot [a kangaroo] ... and bring it to the camp.' *Ibid.*, p. 133.

58 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 62.

59 R. K. Wallace, *Emily Bronte and Beethoven: Romantic Equilibrium in Fiction and Music* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 25.

60 Tague, *Women of Quality*, p. 175.

## The Macarthurs' New Thatched Wattle-and-Daub Hut

In January 1791, six months after their arrival at Sydney Cove, the Macarthurs moved from their initial rudimentary accommodation into a new, slightly larger house: a thatched wattle-and-daub hut.<sup>61</sup> In a letter written by Elizabeth to Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791, Elizabeth Macarthur described the event: 'in January we were remov'd into a more convenient House.'<sup>62</sup>

The Macarthurs' new hut probably had a relatively light timber frame comprising 'saplings covered with a woven mesh of twigs or lathes split from the acacia tree', combined with mud 'and walls plastered with clay'—which was plentiful about 2 kilometres south of Sydney Cove<sup>63</sup>—'to keep out the wind and rain'. This method of building was 'common in England at least from Saxon times'.<sup>64</sup> 'In a cove to the east, which ... the colonists would [come to] know ... as Rushcutters Bay, there were rushes that could be cut and thatched.'<sup>65</sup> The hut's thatched roof was most likely made of 'cabbage-tree fronds or rushes or bark plastered over with clay'.<sup>66</sup> Any pretensions to architectural distinction at Sydney Cove were severely limited by a lack both of resources and of skills.<sup>67</sup> 'Thatched roofs ... were neither durable nor weatherproof and they frequently caught fire in dry summer weather or from ill-built chimneys so that the building of chimneys in thatched huts was finally forbidden.'<sup>68</sup>

It is not known exactly where the Macarthurs' new hut was situated, nor is it known how close it was to the hut they had vacated. Their new thatched wattle-and-daub hut may have been located up the hill to the west of the fledgling colony's parade ground. The parade ground was positioned at what is now the corner of Bridge and George streets.<sup>69</sup>

During the first half of the 1790s,

it appears that building activity at Sydney was concentrated on the erection of the military barracks and the houses of the principal officers

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61 See Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 77.

62 J. N. Hughes (ed.), *The Journal and Letters of Elizabeth Macarthur 1789–1798* (Glebe, NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1984), p. 24.

63 See Bridges, *Foundations of Identity*, p. 28.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

65 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 27.

66 Keneally, *Australians*, p. 83.

67 See Bridges, *Foundations of Identity*, p. 68.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

69 Information derived from a conversation held on Thursday, 11 February 2010 between the author and Gary Crockett, Curator, Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Queens Square, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

[George Worgan was not one of these] and superintendents. An observer in the mid-1790s, Daniel Paine [b. 1770], the colony's boatbuilder, wrote about the appearance of the settlement at that time: 'The houses and public buildings are generally without much attention to order or regularity; the Governor's house is of stone, and situated on a rising ground on the left-hand side of the Cove, and has a pretty appearance'. He mentions the hospital, a temporary prefabricated wooden structure, the brick house for the Principal Surgeon, and 'the stores three in number' situated at the upper part of the Cove, two of which he considered rather inconveniently placed, being too distant from the wharf. The house of the military commandant, the Lieutenant-Governor, was 'pleasantly situated, and sufficient space is left before the parade'.<sup>70</sup> 'The Barracks', he wrote, 'are the most regular buildings and situated on rising ground at the back of the Cove they are built of brick'. The church was merely a 'low thatched barn'. Though the houses of the principal military officers and convict superintendents were built of brick, they were confined to a single storey. 'Other houses in general', he observed, 'are built of posts stuck in the ground at convenient distances to support wattles and plaistered both inside & out.'<sup>71</sup>

Thus it appears that the bricks being made were used mainly in the official buildings, and that emancipists, free settlers, ex-marines and convicts alike had to make do with lath and plaster walls, thatched or shingled roofs, and any other material they could find or scrounge.<sup>72</sup>

On Saturday, 13 December 1794, a report written by an anonymous soldier says that the town at Sydney Cove included '700 good comfortable huts', besides 'numerous brick buildings, the property of the Government'.<sup>73</sup> 'While 700 looks like hyperbole (as does "good comfortable")', this statement suggests a conspicuously large number of households (narrowly defined), in which convicts and others lived in relatively independent fashion, sheltered by timber, mud and thatch.<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps the Macarthurs' new thatched wattle-and-daub hut 'plaistered both inside & out',<sup>75</sup> into which they moved in January 1791, was one of these dwellings.

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70 R. J. B. Knight and A. Frost (eds), *The Journal of Daniel Paine 1794–1797* (Sydney: Library of Australian History in association with the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 1983), pp. 33–4.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

72 H. Proudfoot, 'Fixing the Settlement Upon a Savage Shore: Planning and Building', in G. Aplin (ed.), *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie* (Kensington, NSW: UNSW Press), pp. 62–3. Paine was mistaken when he said Government House was built of stone: the walls were of brick. *Ibid.*, p. 70, fn. 37.

73 Cited in A. Atkinson, 'Taking Possession: Sydney's First Householders', in G. Aplin (ed.), *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie* (Kensington, NSW: UNSW Press, 1988), p. 78. Atkinson's quotation is taken from 'A Soldier's Letter', in *Historical Records of New South Wales. Volume 2: Grose and Paterson, 1793–1795* (Sydney: Charles Potter, Government Printer, 1794), p. 816.

74 Atkinson, 'Taking Possession', p. 78.

75 Knight and Frost, *The Journal of Daniel Paine 1794–1797*, p. 34.



## George Worgan's Piano in the Macarthurs' New Home

George Worgan had his piano moved into the Macarthurs' new thatched wattle-and-daub hut. It is possible that the Macarthurs' new accommodation presented a physical environment that was kinder to the piano than that within which, to that point, Worgan had been forced by circumstance to place it. The officers' dwellings were rudimentary, rough timber buildings, constructed in such a way that they could be improved at a later date. On Sunday, 28 September 1788, Governor Phillip wrote: 'The ... officer's houses ... are buildings that will stand for some years, as they will hereafter be walled up with brick or stone, if limestone can be found in the country, or if sent out as ballast in the transports.'<sup>76</sup> (Then again, the Macarthurs' new abode may have been similar to the officers' houses.)

Perhaps Worgan's close friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur (and/or his innate kindness) resulted in his placing his piano in the Macarthurs' hut. Apart from the musical joys that the instrument would have catalysed, the presence of a piano in the Macarthurs' house would—as a symbol of gentility, and as the colony's only piano—have lent Elizabeth and John considerable social prestige.

Worgan was 34 years old, unmarried and, within the seven months that followed the Macarthurs' arrival at Sydney Cove, had formed a close friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur.

The navy offered medical officers few opportunities to find a wife while they were on active service afloat. Although they would have occasionally enjoyed the pleasure of mixed company when invited to balls and dinners in the ports where they briefly docked, theirs was much more a man's world than the army. By the time they [retired] ... many must have become confirmed bachelors, who were happy to return home and set themselves up as local celebrities, who had sailed the seas.<sup>77</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that Worgan's friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur in any way exceeded the bounds of propriety. In fact, in a

small colonial society which delighted in petty gossip ... [Elizabeth Macarthur] was not touched by any. Scarcely another woman in the colonial world escaped criticism for some breach of taste in dress, manners or propriety. Impossible though it may seem ... [Elizabeth] does not appear to have been mentioned by contemporaries except in praise.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Britton, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, p. 189.

<sup>77</sup> Brockliss et al., *Nelson's Surgeon*, pp. 31–2.

<sup>78</sup> Conway, 'Macarthur, Elizabeth (1766–1850)'.

How incongruous and yet pleasing Worgan's piano must have looked in the Macarthurs' new home, 'sitting probably on a beaten earth floor—maybe on a rug of some kind'.<sup>79</sup> 'The standard carpeting for the period was loose (rather than fitted) and invariably described as "Turkey" rugs.'<sup>80</sup>

Luxury, hand-knotted carpets were imported into London from the Middle and Far East and were fairly readily available from the early eighteenth century. Carpets woven on a loom with a looped pile, rather than individual knots, were made in England from the mid-eighteenth century. They were cheaper than hand-knotted carpets and woven in strips, which could be sewn together to fit rooms of any size.<sup>81</sup>

If there was any rug at all in the Macarthurs' new hut, it is probable (given their modest financial situation) that it was of the cheaper kind.

## When Did George Worgan Place His Piano into the Macarthurs' Thatched Wattle-and-Daub Hut?

It is not known exactly when Worgan's piano was placed into the Macarthurs' thatched wattle-and-daub hut; however, a letter written by Elizabeth to her friend Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791,<sup>82</sup> enables us to posit a time frame within which Worgan's piano may have come into Elizabeth's care. Elizabeth writes:

Still, I wanted something to fill up a certain vacancy in my time, which could neither be done by writing, reading, or conversation ... I shall now tell you of another resource I had to fill up some of my vacant hours. Our new house is ornamented with a pianoforte of Mr. Worgan's.<sup>83</sup>

In the same letter, Elizabeth recounted to Kingdon: 'in January we were remov'd into a more convenient house.'<sup>84</sup>It is reasonable to conclude therefore that Worgan's piano was moved into the Macarthurs' new hut between January 1791 and 7 March 1791.

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79 Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 77.

80 Riding, *Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69*, p. 28.

81 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.

82 Macarthur, 'Letter to Bridget Kingdon', 7 March 1791.

83 F. M. Bladen (ed.), *Historical Records of New South Wales. Volume II: Grose and Paterson 1793–1795* (Sydney: Charles Potter, Government Printer, 1893), pp. 498–9.

84 Hughes, *The Journal and Letters of Elizabeth Macarthur 1789–1798*, p. 24.

## Elizabeth's Piano Lessons

Elizabeth's letter to Bridget Kingdon was one of many she wrote to her childhood friend. In her letter to Bridget dated Monday, 7 March 1791, Elizabeth writes, concerning Worgan's square piano: Worgan 'kindly means to leave it with me, and now under his direction I have begun a new study, but I fear that without my master I shall not make any great proficiency'.<sup>85</sup>

Elizabeth's statement 'I have begun a new study' is perplexing. Either: 1) Elizabeth was resuming piano lessons, having not had any for a time; or, more probably, 2) under Worgan's tutelage, she was beginning piano lessons for the first time in her life.

Given that playing the piano was regarded as a necessary 'polite accomplishment'<sup>86</sup> for young women (ensuring that, amongst other things, they would be rendered more eligible for marriage), that Elizabeth Macarthur could not play the piano seems unusual for the time. It is possible that the financial situation of the Reverend John Kingdon (in whose home Elizabeth was raised) did not allow for the purchase or hire of a piano, or for the payment of a piano teacher. The Reverend Kingdon's income came from clerical 'livings',<sup>87</sup> and would therefore have been limited.

We do not know how many piano lessons George Worgan gave Elizabeth Macarthur, nor do we know if he charged Elizabeth for the privilege. In England, piano lessons were usually expensive. In 1791, for example, Joseph Haydn, whilst in London, was astonished to realise that he could charge a guinea (£1 1s—that is, 21 English shillings) per hour for piano lessons.<sup>88</sup> Haydn said, '*Da machte ich große Augen*' (a colloquial translation would be, 'My eyes popped out of my head').<sup>89</sup> In Haydn's Vienna, 'the standard fee appears to have been one florin [2 English shillings], or one-tenth what Haydn charged in London. From his more affluent Viennese students, on the other hand, Mozart obtained one-half gold ducat per hour, or about [£1 5s—that is, 25 English shillings].'<sup>90</sup> In 1791, a guinea (£1 1s) was 'more than a week's earnings for an English building craftsman'.<sup>91</sup>

85 Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 229.

86 See Collins, *A Voyage to New South Wales with Governor Phillip 1787–1788*, p. 44.

87 See J. Austen, *Jane Austen: The Complete Novels with More than Two Hundred Full Colour Illustrations by Hugh Thomson* (London: CRW Publishing, 2009), 'Biographical Note', p. 7.

88 See Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64.

89 H. C. R. Landon and D. W. Jones, *Haydn: His Life and Music* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), p. 232. See also Gotwals, *Haydn*, p. 35.

90 Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64. 'In a provincial capital like the Salzburg of Mozart's day, an annual income of five hundred' florins—that is, £50 or 1000 English shillings—'could provide a small family with a decent life; in Vienna such a yearly sum could sustain only one person in comfort.' R. W. Gutman, *Mozart: A Cultural Biography* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. xvi.

91 Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64.

In London, a run-of-the-mill teacher would not have charged as much as the internationally famous Haydn. Nevertheless, in England, piano lessons were never cheap, and some piano teachers (regardless of their status) earned sufficient income to live well. Muzio Clementi, following his return to London in 1784 after a concert tour on the Continent, taught for 16 hours a day. This gruelling regimen enabled him to amass 'a fortune of ... £15,000'.<sup>92</sup>

For the time, Clementi's earnings are miraculous; in both London and Vienna, teaching the piano was normally 'limited to the winter season and was a highly undependable source of income'.<sup>93</sup> Clementi did, however, charge more than Mozart for lessons.<sup>94</sup> On the Continent, keyboard instrument teachers were sometimes 'so poorly paid, that they were often forced to earn extra income by selling lottery tickets or painting portraits'.<sup>95</sup> The Italian composer and keyboard instrument teacher Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802), 'whose music Mozart quoted admiringly in his opera *Don Giovanni*, traveled to Russia at the request of Empress Catherine II and was rewarded with his own village in the Ukraine. But that was unusual.'<sup>96</sup>

Haydn's surprise at the amount of money that could be earned as a piano teacher in England's capital city is indicative of the feelings of many Continental virtuosi who found London to be a veritable goldmine of financial opportunity. In 1791—the same year in which Worgan's piano was placed in the Macarthurs' thatched wattle-and-daub hut—Gebhardt Friedrich August Wendeborn wrote: 'Many foreign singers, fiddlers, and dancers, are extravagantly paid: and, if they are the least frugal, they are enabled to retire to their own country, where they may live in affluence, enriched by English money.'<sup>97</sup>

Perhaps, with Latin and Greek on the educational curriculum, the Reverend Kingdon decided that there was not enough time (or need) to provide an education in music for his daughters, Bridget and Elizabeth. Eighteenth-century conduct books commonly portray the 'genteel' daughters of wealthy merchants (whose financial situation was unstable) as being encouraged 'to learn music only as a supplementary accomplishment, after acquiring useful needlework skills'.<sup>98</sup> It appears that the Reverend Kingdon—who was not a wealthy merchant, and whose financial situation was fragile—regarded Latin and Greek as more desirable skills for his daughters to learn than either music or needlework.

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92 Ibid., p. 64.

93 W. J. Baumol and H. Baumol, 'On the Economics of Musical Composition in Mozart's Vienna', in J. M. Morris (ed.), *On Mozart* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press and Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 95.

94 See *ibid.*, p. 95.

95 Isacoff, *A Natural History of the Piano*, p. 67.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

97 Wendeborn, *A View of England Towards the Close of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 2, p. 237.

98 Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 51.

## George Worgan Gives His Piano to Elizabeth Macarthur

The date of Elizabeth Macarthur's written remark that Worgan 'kindly means to leave it [the piano] with me'<sup>99</sup> (7 March 1791) and the date of Worgan's departure from Sydney Cove for Plymouth aboard the Dutch ship *Waaksamheyd* ('*Wakefulness*') (Wednesday, 27 April 1791) suggest that Worgan informed Elizabeth of his intention to give his piano to her as a gift at least seven weeks prior to his embarking upon his return journey to England.

'Anthropologists have long recognized the role of gift-giving in cultures to create ties of reciprocal obligations',<sup>100</sup> and yet no evidence suggests that Worgan had any ulterior motives for leaving his elegant and valuable instrument with Elizabeth Macarthur. During the late eighteenth century, networks of gift exchange commonly existed amongst aristocratic women.

[E]xchanges of gifts often functioned as an informal system of credit, by which purchases could be made on behalf of one individual in the knowledge that eventually the roles of giver and recipient would be reversed.<sup>101</sup>

Gifts exchanged between women of 'quality' often comprised

small items, often decorative or combining decorative with more utilitarian functions'. Such gifts 'were thus outside the category of large, dynastic purchases with which men were most involved'. Gifts sometimes 'included small furnishings such as mirrors, small tables or screens, and books.'<sup>102</sup>

That George Worgan not only gave his piano away, but also gave the instrument to a woman who was not a member of his family and with whom he had no romantic attachment 'complicates any attempt to distinguish between [late eighteenth-century] ... personal or emotional meanings of consumer goods and their significance as indicators of status or fashion'.<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps for Worgan the piano had been too much of a nuisance on the trip from Portsmouth to Sydney Cove, and he did not want to be encumbered with the responsibility of caring for the instrument during his homeward voyage.

99 Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 229.

100 Tague, *Women of Quality*, p. 136.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

102 *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

Perhaps the journey had proved to be too harmful a context for the maintenance of the instrument's physical integrity; maybe some damage to the fabric of the instrument had occurred during the journey, and Worgan was not keen to risk further damage being done.

Perhaps the soundboard of the instrument had already split because of temperature and humidity extremes, and Worgan felt that the instrument had been damaged to such an extent that not only was it beyond repair, but also it was not worth taking back to England. (Several cracks in the soundboard and bridge of Worgan's 1780/86? Beck square piano have been crudely repaired.<sup>104</sup> Because of climatic extremes both at sea and at Sydney Cove, it is possible that these cracks had appeared prior to 7 March 1791—that is, prior to the date of Elizabeth's letter in which she remarks that Worgan 'kindly means to leave it with me'.)<sup>105</sup>

Perhaps there was no room for the instrument on board the tightly packed *Waaksamheyd*<sup>106</sup> (the ship was 'totally destitute of every accommodation and every good quality which could promise to render so long a voyage either comfortable or expeditious').<sup>107</sup>

Perhaps altruistically, Worgan felt that the future cultural development of the new colony would be aided by the presence of his piano. The successful establishment of British cultural ideals in New South Wales was considered of utmost importance in the minds of the educated early arrivals.<sup>108</sup>

Worgan's decision to give his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur may also have arisen from his character as an officer—albeit a warrant officer. 'The basic requirement was that an officer had to be a gentleman ... Gentlemen might not be of high birth, they might lack land, they might even be without money, but they needed some education, courage, generosity, unselfishness and, most importantly, a high sense of honour.'<sup>109</sup>

Perhaps it was Worgan's 'generosity, unselfishness and ... high sense of honour'<sup>110</sup> that precluded him from selling (rather than giving) his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur. He may also have thought twice about selling the instrument to Elizabeth because of the influence of the context within which he found himself:

Botany Bay was designed as a self-sufficient economy in which money would not be required. Convicts would labour to feed and clothe their

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104 See 'Soundboard: Condition' and 'Bridge: Condition', in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.

105 Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 229.

106 See Currey, 'A First Fleet Surgeon at Sydney Cove', p. 26.

107 Tench, 'A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson', pp. 179–80.

108 Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 21.

109 G. Parsons, 'The Commercialism of Honour: Early Australian Capitalism 1788–1809', in G. Aplin (ed.), *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie* (Kensington NSW: UNSW Press, 1988), p. 104.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

gaolers and themselves, they would then be emancipated and would move on to small grants of land where they would be able to survive with minimal government assistance. New South Wales was provided with no treasury, a surprising fact at a time and in a country where ‘money beareth all the stroke’.<sup>111</sup>

Perhaps Worgan did not regard his piano as representing a particularly expensive outlay, and so did not consider it necessary to recover his expenditure by selling the instrument to Elizabeth Macarthur.

Perhaps Worgan, as a music educator, was loath to take his piano from a student who had, within a short period, exhibited both aptitude and rapid development.

Perhaps Worgan suspected that by 1791 his piano may have become somewhat old-fashioned, and was embarrassed to take the instrument back to London (even though he had had no opportunity since leaving England to have seen a more ‘modern’ instrument with which to compare his own). Regardless, had the instrument returned to London with Worgan, it would doubtless have generated much interest because of its association with the antipodean colony.

One wonders how often George Worgan played his piano for the Macarthurs’ delight as it sat in their thatched wattle-and-daub hut. He may have visited the Macarthurs specifically to keep the instrument in tune (but not played it for them once the tuning had been accomplished). He may also have tuned the piano just prior to his playing it. He may also have tuned the instrument just prior to giving Elizabeth Macarthur a piano lesson.

## ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’

If we assume that Elizabeth began piano lessons for the first time in her life once she had moved into her new hut in January 1791, her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated Monday, 7 March 1791, attests to a remarkable pianistic progress.

Elizabeth states: ‘I am told however I have done wonders in being able to play off “God Save the King” and “Foot’s Minuet”, besides that of reading the notes with great facility.’<sup>112</sup>

From a purely educational perspective, it seems odd that Worgan selected ‘God Save the King’ as part of the repertoire that he used to teach Elizabeth. Amongst the better contemporaneous teaching works available in London at the time were the two volumes of *A Set of Progressive Lessons* (1780–85) by Samuel Arnold, and the

111 Ibid., p. 102. Parsons takes the quotation from: E. P. Thompson, ‘Eighteenth Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class’, in *Social History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (May) (London: Taylor & Francis, 1978).

112 Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 229.

first part of James Hook's (1746–1827) *Guida di musica* (ca 1785), containing 'twenty-four progressive lessons'.<sup>113</sup> 'God Save the King' has no unique or special pedagogical qualities that make it particularly relevant to the development of piano technique. Perhaps it was the melodic simplicity of the anthem that caused Worgan to select it as a teaching piece. Writing to George Saville Carey, Marquis of Halifax (1743–1807), on Saturday, 13 June 1795, Dr W. Harrington of Bath (d. 1757), Somerset, voiced his enthusiasm for the lack of complexity in 'God Save the King':

[N]o laureat or composer has furnished the world with any production more complimentary or more popular: which must ever be the consequence of concise elegance and natural simplicity, both of which are too much neglected and despised in the present fantastic, unaffecting compositions, more adapted to the swift hand than the feeling heart. But I am broaching old heresy, and may be brought to the stake: *so piano, piano*, for the executioners of music are powerful and many.<sup>114</sup>

As both Australia's first piano teacher and Elizabeth Macarthur's good friend, Worgan may have used 'God Save the King' from a desire to reinforce a shared cultural tradition. Perhaps the song reminded them both of the 'global power of a puissant England'<sup>115</sup>—an England that Worgan and Elizabeth would have unhesitatingly regarded as being morally and culturally superior to all others, the 'divinely ordained inheritor of the imperial and civilizational traditions of ... Europe'.<sup>116</sup> After all, Worgan had 'judged [the] indigenous people [of Sydney Cove] as being largely un-musical because of their lack of sustained interest in European music'.<sup>117</sup>

The drum was beat before them, which terrified them exceedingly, they liked the fife, which pleased them for 2 or 3 minutes. Indeed music of any kind does not attract their attention, long together, they will sometimes jump to it, and make a grunting noise by way of keeping time to the tune.<sup>118</sup>

As the British Empire expanded across the globe,

a peculiar illogicality seized the British: we rule more of the world than any other nation, therefore we must be superior to any other nation. In

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113 See J. Harley, *British Harpsichord Music. Volume 2: History* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1994), p. 142.

114 Quoted in R. Clark, *An Account of the National Anthem Entitled God Save the King! With Authorities Taken from Sion College Library, the Ancient Records of the Merchant Tailors' Company, the Old Cheque-Book of His Majesty's Chapel, &c. &c. &c. Selected, Edited, and Arranged by Richard Clark, Gentleman of His Majesty's Chapels Royal, Deputy Vicar Choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, and of Westminster Abbey, and Secretary to the Glee Club* (London: W. Wright, 1822), p. 11.

115 S. Kaul, *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire: English Verse in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp. 1–2.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

117 Skinner, *Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition*, p. 63.

118 Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan*, p. 19.



fact, of course, it was technological advance and entrepreneurial flair which gave birth to the empire. But a belief in some moral preeminence offered reassurance to the anxious imperialist.<sup>119</sup>

Britain's military and commercial successes, and the expansion of its territorial power, produced a triumphalist mentality, and 'God Save the King' was immutably linked with patriotism and triumphalism. A mere five months after Elizabeth Macarthur had penned her letter to Bridget Kingdon on Monday, 7 March 1791, a 'pantomimical interlude' was presented at the new Street Theatre in Birmingham, on Monday, 22 August 1791. As a forerunner to the cinema newsreel genre, this entertainment was advertised as a

pantomime exhibition called Botany Bay; or, A Trip to Port Jackson, with entire new scenery, painted for the occasion ... in which will be introduced a picturesque view of the coast of New South Wales ... arrival of the Grand Fleet, landing, reception, and employment of the convicts. To conclude with the ceremony of planting the British flag, on taking possession of a new discovered island, with a dance by the convicts, and the grand chorus of 'God Save the King'.<sup>120</sup>

Furthermore, the notion of England's triumphant supremacy extended into matters spiritual, for there was a 'tradition prevalent in eighteenth-century English sermons and theological writings that equated England with [the new] Israel'.<sup>121</sup> 'As for the opiate of global mastery, nineteenth- and ... twentieth-century Britain would remain hopelessly hooked',<sup>122</sup> Britain was 'gluttonous of universal dominion'.<sup>123</sup> The splendid magnitude of England's history, with its 'immense Valhalla of kings and heroes ... its Elizabethan and Victorian ages, its thousands of incidents which come up in the mind, simple as icons and yet miraculous [suggested] that what [Britain had] ... been, it [could] ... be again ... and forever'.<sup>124</sup>

How apt it was that stirring renditions of the English national anthem should be heard in Birmingham during the period when a more gentle (but no less heartfelt) version for piano was played within the context of a newly established English colony on the far side of the world. At Sydney Cove, "'God Save the King" celebrated security in a very insecure situation, imperial values in a fledgling colony',<sup>125</sup> and

119 Paxman, *Empire*, pp. 9–10.

120 See Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 231.

121 Pelkey, 'Music, Memory, and the People in Selected British Periodicals of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', p. 69.

122 S. Schama, *A History of Britain: The British Wars 1603–1776* (London: BBC, 2001), p. 524.

123 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 747.

124 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

125 See Woodfield, *Music of the Raj*, p. 139.

the intransigent majesty of empire. George Worgan's pedagogical efforts, and his use of 'God Save the King' within an educational context, reflect the sentiments expressed by the late eighteenth-century Irish poet Anna Maria Edwards:

By flattery's art, most sovereigns are ruled;  
By patriot's art, the people are cajoled.  
Strip ancient heroes of their art, and you,  
Will strip them of their fame and laurels too.  
Since thus it sways us, let us use our art  
'To mend the morals, and improve the heart;'  
We too may use it in our country's cause;  
To make her prosper, well deserves applause:  
Nature has done her part, let art appear,  
And you may raise a new Arcadia here.<sup>126</sup>

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, 'Foot's (Foote's) Minuet'<sup>127</sup> was often used within the context of instrumental tuition. The work was commonly associated with beginners and/or with players of limited technical skill. For example, Francis Venables Vernon, in his *Voyages and Travels of a Sea Officer*,<sup>128</sup> makes the following observation:

[The] region directly below the after part of the lower gun deck, is inhabited by the midshipmen and surgeons mates, who, in general, form as motley a crew, as maybe supposed to arise from difference of countries, differences of age and descent, and difference of education. Their several cabins are in the centre, amidships; and separated from each other by partitions of canvas or hammocks, thereby facilitating the communication of discordant notes, arising from the disputes that frequently happen. Or if the region is musically inclined, to the melodious tones of beginners (for they seldom attain Handel's perfection) attempting on a flute, fife, or violin, the tunes of Nancy Dawson or Foot's minuet.<sup>129</sup>

*The Gentleman's Magazine* attests to the early nineteenth-century popularity of 'Foot's Minuet'. A letter written to the magazine dated Sunday, 23 October 1808, contains the following complaint:

Much as I am a lover of musick, still i think every kind relating to the church ought, if not sacred, at least to be conducted with some propriety.

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126 A. M. Edwards, 'Prologue', in *The Enchantress* (Dublin: Capel 1783), vi–vii, II, pp. 25–34. Quoted in Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 171.

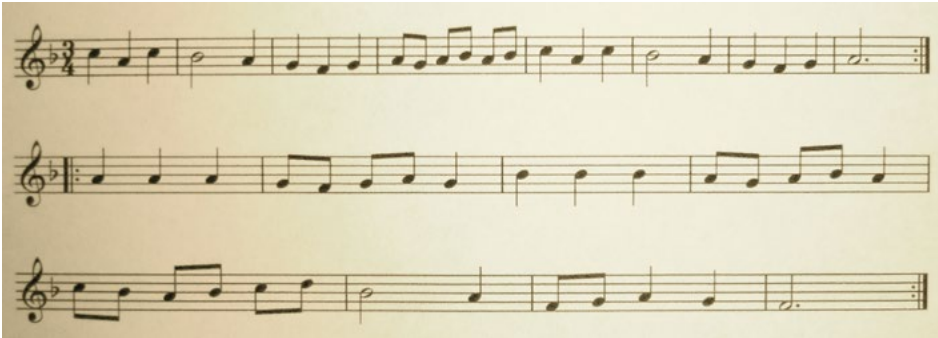
127 'Foot's Minuet' may have been named after the playwright and actor Samuel Foote (1720–77).

128 F. V. Vernon, *Voyages and Travels of a Sea Officer* (Dublin: Wm M'Kenzie, 1792), p. 7.

129 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

It is very singular that the *chimes in many country churches* play what is called ‘Foot’s Minuet’ ... to hear church chimes play a *dance*, fit only for the amusement of children, is truly ridiculous.<sup>130</sup>

‘Foot’s Minuet’ (Plate 70) appears in many eighteenth and early nineteenth-century instrument tutorials and music compilations<sup>131</sup> (occasionally with subtle ornamental alterations to the melodic line).



#### Plate 70 ‘Foot’s Minuet’.

Source: Transposed by the author from P. J. Perry, *Bass Recorder Solos No. 7: Traditional Melodies of the British Isles, with Variations* (n.d.), p. 5.

Because of the preponderance of smaller note values in ‘Foot’s Minuet’ (crotchets/quarter notes and quavers/eighth notes, rather than minims/half notes and crotchets), the tempo of the work is moderate, moving in three beats per bar (rather than in one pulse per bar).

An outstanding example of the moderate minuet occurs in the finale of the first act of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, for which there exists a metronomization of ... [crotchet/quarter note] = 96 suggested by Wenzel Tomášek [1774–1850]. He ‘remembered’ the tempo from hearing many performances by the musicians of the Prague Opera, who were trained by Mozart himself.<sup>132</sup>

That George Worgan selected a moderate-tempo minuet for Elizabeth Macarthur to learn makes pedagogical sense; within a performative context, the work would not have overly taxed her emerging reading skills or technique.

The historian of music education Martina Schneider observes that during the late eighteenth century, most music composed for the use of children ‘had

130 S. Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine: And Historical Chronicle. For the Year 1809* (London: John Nichols & Son, 1809), Vol. 79, Part 1, p. 40.

131 For a list of selected eighteenth and early nineteenth-century music publications within which ‘Foot’s Minuet’ may be found, see Appendix G, Volume 2 of this publication.

132 Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*, p. 338.

genre titles such as sonatina and minuet, and served pedagogical purposes'.<sup>133</sup> That Worgan gave Macarthur a minuet commonly associated with instrumental pedagogy—that is, 'Foot's Minuet'—suggests that she began her lessons with no prior piano-playing skills.

Perhaps the rudiments of piano playing and musicianship, as described by Margaret Fowke in 1803,<sup>134</sup> did not immediately become a part of Elizabeth's technical skills: Elizabeth makes no mention of being able, for example, to finger scalic passagework, broken chords or arpeggios, nor does she indicate that she has any understanding of basic harmony. Perhaps she learned 'God Save the King' and 'Foot's Minuet' through imitation (her familiarity with 'God Save the King' and/or perhaps an innately 'good ear' may have functioned as aids to learning).

That she could read 'the notes with great facility' does not necessarily mean that she could play accurately in response to a spontaneous reading of either a single or a multi-voiced score. Perhaps she is referring only to her ability—in the absence of a performative context—to identify note names accurately. Elizabeth Macarthur may also sometimes have played the piano by ear. Some pianists never 'learned to read notes very successfully, despite years of lessons, just as some [students] never got very adept at reading in French or spelling in English'.<sup>135</sup>

Unfortunately, the scores that Elizabeth Macarthur used are lost, so we will never know what technical and intellectual demands were made upon her by the particular settings of 'God Save the King' and 'Foot's Minuet' that she learned. Perhaps the versions she used comprised only a single-note melodic line, with no supporting accompaniment or harmonic texture. (As an educated woman, Elizabeth would have been aware of the rhythmic, dynamic and phrasing characteristics of a minuet, and this knowledge would have assisted her in learning the melodic line of 'Foot's Minuet'.) Or perhaps she was a precocious student, and played settings of 'God Save the King' and 'Foot's Minuet' in two or more parts. The scores Elizabeth used would have been either published printed versions or handwritten copies.

Plate 71 shows the kind of four-part harmonisation of 'God Save the King' that a competent late eighteenth-century English amateur pianist may have been expected to play. This arrangement was made by the English composer of church music and organist Jonathan Battishill. Battishill was renowned both for his performances of Händel's keyboard works and for his extempore playing. He had an exceptional memory, which was revealed in a concert where he

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133 M. Schneider, *Studien zu den Klavierschulen im deutschsprachigen Raum von 1885 bis 1900* [Studies on the Piano Schools in German-Speaking Countries from 1885 to 1900], Unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Vienna, 1980), p. 52.

134 See Woodfield, *Music of the Raj*, p. 222.

135 J. Parakilas, 'Austen and the Domestic Life of the Piano', in J. Parakilas (ed.), *Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), p. 77.

played and sang, from memory, several airs from Samuel Arnold's oratorio 'The Prodigal Son', having not heard the work for 20 years.<sup>136</sup> It is unlikely that, in 1791, Elizabeth Macarthur would have been able to surmount the technical challenges posed by this setting.



**Plate 71 'God Save the King. Harmonized by Jon<sup>th</sup> Battishill Org<sup>t</sup> of S<sup>t</sup> Pauls.'** Battishill may have composed this setting during the 1780s.

Source: R. Clark, *An Account of the National Anthem Entitled God Save the King! With Authorities Taken from Sion College Library, the Ancient Records of the Merchant Tailors' Company, the Old Cheque-Book of His Majesty's Chapel, &c. &c. &c. Selected, Edited, and Arranged by Richard Clark, Gentleman of His Majesty's Chapels Royal, Deputy Vicar Choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, and of Westminster Abbey, and Secretary to the Glee Club* (London: W. Wright, 1822), between pp. 30 and 31. Geoffrey Lancaster Collection, Perth.

<sup>136</sup> See P. W. Jones, 'Battishill, Jonathan', in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 2, p. 293.

Perhaps George Worgan arranged 'God Save the King' and 'Foot's Minuet' himself, in order to cater to Elizabeth's specific educational needs (if so, Elizabeth's music scores would have been written by hand). With the musical training that George's father had undoubtedly provided for him, his familiarity with, and the commonly encountered harmonic simplicity of, 'God Save the King' and 'Foot's Minuet' would have made the task of pedagogically oriented arrangement relatively easy.

## Elizabeth Macarthur, the Piano Student

Elizabeth's rapid progress suggests that she had an innate musical intelligence or that George Worgan was a skilled teacher—or both. Elizabeth's smug remarks concerning the rapid development of her musical abilities are predicated on 'I am told'.<sup>137</sup> Exactly who, or how many people, made encouraging remarks to Elizabeth in relation to her burgeoning musical skills is unclear. It is reasonable to assume that the prime flatterer may have been George Worgan. Certainly, in the early days of the settlement, 'the practice of any musical talent, however limited, must have been appreciated'.<sup>138</sup>

Even if Elizabeth Macarthur's playing was at best deficient, Worgan—as a polite, kindly and amiable man—would doubtless have sought to affirm his student; faced with what may have been Elizabeth's lack of musicality (we will never know), his remark could have been ironic. The humane and intrepid Worgan did, after all, have 'a sharp eye and a sense of humour'.<sup>139</sup>

It is not known exactly when Worgan began to teach Elizabeth the piano. She may even have begun piano lessons quite soon after her first meeting with him, close to her arrival at Sydney Cove on Monday, 28 June 1790.

If Worgan began teaching Elizabeth shortly after they first met, she would have needed access to his piano not only for lessons, but also for practice. At this time, presumably, Worgan's piano was located at his residence.

The pressure of social norms would have made it unlikely that Elizabeth visited Worgan's residence alone for piano lessons and practice. Such a context would have encouraged scandal-mongering and gossip. No documentary evidence suggests that Elizabeth was in any way associated with socially questionable behaviour.

If Elizabeth's piano lessons began just after her first meeting with Worgan, and his piano was located at his residence, exactly how Elizabeth managed to practise

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137 Quoted in Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. 229.

138 Cumes, *Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid*, p. 26.

139 Egan, *Buried Alive*, p. xiv.

when Worgan was present without offending social sensibilities remains a mystery. (She may have waited until Worgan was absent from his home, keeping the constant company of her servant.)

If, on the other hand, Elizabeth's piano tuition began after Worgan had moved his piano into her hut—that is, between January 1791 ('in January we were remov'd into a more convenient House')<sup>140</sup> and Monday, 7 March 1791 (the date of Elizabeth's letter to Bridget Kingdon in which she mentions that Worgan's piano is situated in her home)—it would have been much easier for her to live out society's behavioural expectations without the threat of scandal. Worgan may have moved his piano into Elizabeth's home in order to create a context within which she might practise whenever she wished.

Regardless of when and where Elizabeth learnt and practised the piano, she reveals herself to be a tenacious student. Having the time to develop as a pianist through ardent, self-disciplined application suggests that Elizabeth 'was an example of the gradually improving social life of Sydney—a lady who had no occupation other than being a lady'.<sup>141</sup>

## Elizabeth Macarthur, the Socialite

Elizabeth's social activities included luncheons at Government House. This is implied by the comments of Mary Ann Parker, the wife of John Parker, the captain of the *Gorgon*, which dropped anchor at Sydney Cove on Wednesday, 21 September 1791. Mary recalls:

When we went on shore we were all admiration at the natural beauties ... Our amusements here, although neither numerous nor expensive, were to me perfectly novel and agreeable: the fatherly attention of the good Governor upon all occasions with the friendly politeness of the officers rendered our *séjour* perfectly happy and comfortable ... Our parties generally consisted of ... the ladies who reside at the colony ... the Governor's House ... is a small convenient building placed upon a gentle ascent and surrounded by ... a couple of acres of garden ground.<sup>142</sup>

As one of the 'ladies who reside at the colony', Elizabeth Macarthur would have socialised with Governor Phillip at Government House. Her 'good looks and ladylike manners helped make her popular'.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Macarthur, 'Letter to Bridget Kingdon', 7 March 1791. Quoted in Hughes, *The Journal and Letters of Elizabeth Macarthur 1789–1798*, p. 24.

<sup>141</sup> Parker, *Arthur Phillip*, p. 225.

<sup>142</sup> Parker, *A Voyage Round the World in the Gorgon Man of War*, p. 92.

<sup>143</sup> de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 62. An undated watercolour portrait reputedly of Elizabeth Macarthur by an unknown artist, on ivory, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pa 8; Digital order no. a2357001).

Upon those occasions when the established etiquette rendered it necessary that [Governor Phillip] ... should invite the officers of the colony and their wives to dine with him at Government House, he usually informed his guests that they must bring their own bread as he had none to spare. It is told how he jokingly wrote upon the invitations to Captain and Mrs. Macarthur, 'There will always be a roll for Mrs. Macarthur.'<sup>144</sup>

It appears that Elizabeth Macarthur was 'so popular with Governor Phillip she was the only guest who did not have to bring her own bread, despite the fear of a famine'.<sup>145</sup> In fact, Governor Phillip took such an interest in Elizabeth's wellbeing that, from early 1791, he daily sent her fruit 'of some little thing or other'.<sup>146</sup>

## Rose Hill

In June 1791—five months after the Macarthurs had moved into their thatched wattle-and-daub hut—John Macarthur, accompanied by Elizabeth, was posted to Rose Hill, 24 kilometres west of Sydney. 'Rose Hill ... was rapidly displacing Sydney as the real centre of the colony.'<sup>147</sup> 'Governor Phillip claimed that he would have chosen the site for his infant colony if he had known about it earlier, preferring it to Sydney Cove.'<sup>148</sup> In 1791, two-thirds of the colony's population was living at Rose Hill.<sup>149</sup> Governor

Phillip established [the] ... settlement at Rose Hill in November 1788. Nearby, he laid out the township [eventually known as] ... Parramatta around a main street, 205 feet [62.5 metres] wide and a mile [1.6 kilometres] long, 'commencing near the landing place, and running in a direction west, to the foot of the rising ground named Rose Hill, where a house was built for the governor'.<sup>150</sup>

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144 Lee, *The Coming of the British to Australia 1788–1829*.

145 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 62.

146 See King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 18.

147 J. M. Freeland, 'Elizabeth Farm', in *Historic Homesteads* (Canberra: Australian Council of National Trusts—Heritage Reprints, 1976), p. 1.

148 'Historic Sites', in *Book of Australian Facts* (Sydney: Reader's Digest Australia, 1992), p. 292.

149 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 34.

150 B. Fletcher, 'Sydney: A Southern Emporium', in P. Statham (ed.), *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 55.



On Thursday, 2 June 1791,<sup>151</sup> Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench observed that the name ‘Rose Hill’ had been ‘changed, by order of the Governor, to that of Parra-mât-ta, the native name of it’.<sup>152</sup> This was a ‘reference to the Indigenous word for the eels that thrived in the shallow estuary’<sup>153</sup> at the head of the harbour. In 1790—the year before John Macarthur was posted to Parramatta—a second residence in the colony for the governor was built there.<sup>154</sup>

Being on a river, Parramatta was easily accessible via a half-day boat journey from Sydney Cove. It is not known if Worgan’s piano remained in the Macarthurs’ wattle-and-daub hut at Sydney Cove or if Elizabeth took the instrument to Rose Hill.

There can be little doubt that Elizabeth Macarthur would have missed George Worgan. By the time the Macarthurs had departed from Sydney for Rose Hill, Worgan was already three months into his 13-month return voyage to England aboard the hired Dutch vessel *Waaksamheyd*. In a letter written to Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791—that is, about seven weeks before Worgan’s departure—Elizabeth wrote: ‘I assure you in losing him, a very considerable branch of our society will be lopp’d off.’<sup>155</sup>

## Who Tuned George Worgan’s Piano for Elizabeth Macarthur?

It is not known who tuned Worgan’s piano once it came into Elizabeth Macarthur’s possession. During the late eighteenth century, ‘most young women ... were unable or unwilling to acquire this skill’.<sup>156</sup> Tuning Worgan’s piano would have been necessary on a regular basis because of the instabilities of the climate.

Did George Worgan leave a pitchpipe along with the instrument, having given Elizabeth instructions on how to tune? Or did Worgan use the context of piano lessons to teach Elizabeth how to tune? In his *East India Vade-Mecum*, Captain Thomas Williamson informs us that learning to tune a piano ‘may be effected in the course of a month, or six weeks’.<sup>157</sup> If Elizabeth began taking piano lessons either soon after she first met George Worgan or between January 1791

151 According to Cobley, *Sydney Cove 1791–1792*, p. 78. Tench’s entry reads only ‘June 1791’. See Tench, ‘A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson’, p. 203.

152 Tench, ‘A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson’, p. 203.

153 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 34.

154 A watercolour drawing entitled *View of Governor’s House, Rosehill*, by an unknown artist, dated ca 1798, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG SSV1B/3; Digital order no. a928407).

155 Bladen, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. 2, p. 498.

156 Woodfield, *Music of the Raj*, p. 79.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

('in January we were remov'd into a more convenient house')<sup>158</sup> and the date of Elizabeth's letter to Bridget Kingdon in which she states 'our new house is ornamented with a pianoforte of Mr. Worgan's'<sup>159</sup> (7 March 1791), she would have had more than Williamson's requisite 'month' or 'six weeks' to learn how to tune prior to Worgan's departure from Sydney Cove on Wednesday, 27 April 1791.

About 1784, Margaret Fowke, writing in Calcutta to 'Mrs Kitchen', describes a situation that may well have been experienced by Elizabeth Macarthur: 'the fear of being entirely without the use of my [piano] ... induced me to attempt to learn the unpleasing but useful task of tuning it. I have made, by taking short and frequent lessons, a good progress.'<sup>160</sup> In relation to tuning, Worgan's piano, 'an icon of imperial identity ... [can] be seen as representing the colonial endeavour itself, problematic, but worth the effort'.<sup>161</sup>

Was there a convict who possessed the skills necessary to tune Elizabeth Macarthur's piano? 'The anonymous individual placed on government rations in 1800 to maintain musical instruments was probably there to service the military, but in his spare time could have worked for the general public'—including Elizabeth Macarthur.<sup>162</sup>

Perhaps one of the regimental band musicians tuned Elizabeth's piano; in the absence of a piano tuner, this would not have been unusual. During the early 1850s in Wellington, New Zealand, for example, Charlotte Godley (1821–1907), wife of John Robert Godley (1814–61), the founder of Canterbury, took delivery of a piano. Writing to her mother, Charlotte recounts: 'allured from my writing by the delights of music, as my pianoforte arrived, and though out of tune, I could not resist playing one thing after another all night. The band sergeant, however, can tune pretty well, and Mr Buckley has undertaken to send him to us.'<sup>163</sup>

Another example of regimental band musicians being engaged to tune pianos is provided by Anne Maria Bourke (1806–84), the daughter of newly appointed NSW Governor Sir Richard Bourke (1777–1855).<sup>164</sup> In a diary entry dated

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158 Macarthur, 'Letter to Bridget Kingdon', 7 March 1791. Quoted in Hughes, *The Journal and Letters of Elizabeth Macarthur 1789–1798*, p. 24.

159 Bladen, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. 2, pp. 498–9.

160 Woodfield, *Music of the Raj*, p. 79.

161 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

162 Quoted in R. Jordan, 'Music and Civil Society in New South Wales, 1788–1809', in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (December 2012), p. 198. Jordan sources his information from *Historical Records of Australia*, Series 1, Vol. 2, p. 617.

163 Quoted in Macgibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p. 14. Macgibbon takes the quotation from: C. Godley, *Letters from Early New Zealand, 1850–1853*, edited by J. R. Godley (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1951).

164 Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 74.

Thursday, 8 December 1831,<sup>165</sup> Anne writes: ‘My piano forte is very well thank you, the master of the 17th Band is now tuning it.’<sup>166</sup> It could be construed that Anne is referring to part of an ongoing tuning regime.

Given that Elizabeth Macarthur had access to regimental resources similar to those available to Charlotte Godley and Anne Bourke, it is reasonable to assume that a regimental band musician may either on occasion or recurrently have tuned Worgan’s piano.

Nineteen years passed between Worgan’s departure for England (on Wednesday, 27 April 1791) and Elizabeth’s acquisition of a ‘new’ piano (on Thursday, 4 January 1810) at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction. During these years, one presumes that Elizabeth had Worgan’s piano tuned, if not on a regular basis, at least intermittently. Alternatively, Elizabeth may have allowed the instrument to sit untuned. It appears that, even several decades later, it was not unusual to encounter an untuned piano. For example, in 1845—that is, 54 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur, and four years after her death—the grazier John Everett wrote: ‘on each side of us, and far beyond us, petticoats are to be found, and pianos ... considerably out of tune.’<sup>167</sup>

## Professional Piano Tuners in Sydney

During the eighteenth century, owners of keyboard instruments were commonly expected to tune their own instruments (or to have someone on their premises who could tune for them). During the early nineteenth century, professional piano tuners began to pay house calls. What lies behind the establishment of this specialist profession? Apart from the piano’s popularity, a great part of the answer to this question lies

with the [piano’s] development ... As the tension of the strings increased, as the fundamentals of the [sound] ... grew louder in relation to the upper harmonics, and as tuning pins [wrest-pins] became trickier to fix in place, it became harder both to hear whether strings were in tune and to achieve a result that would hold.<sup>168</sup>

The first piano-tuning advertisement published in a Sydney newspaper appears in 1818—that is, 27 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur—in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 31 January:

165 A. Thomson, *Journal of a Voyage to Australia* (Sydney: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, August–December 1831), Doc. 2801. ‘The diary is in the form of a diary/letter written to her youngest sister [Frances], addressed as ‘dearest Fanny’.’ Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 75. On 18 September 1833, Anne married the public servant and parliamentarian Sir Edward Deas Thomson (1800–79).

166 Quoted in Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 75.

167 Quoted in Crisp, ‘The Piano in Australia’, p. 28. Crisp takes the quotation from: Pownall, *Australian Pioneer Women*, p. 162.

168 J. Parakilas, ‘The Piano Tuner’, in J. Parakilas (ed.), *Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), p. 157.

Robert McIntosh, who taught music at his house in York Street,<sup>169</sup> announced that instruments including the pianoforte, would be 'tuned and put in order when they require it'.<sup>170</sup>

Almost six years later—that is, 32 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur—the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 23 October 1823 published an advertisement for 'Mr. John Scarr, lately arrived in the colony ... [on the] brig Francis'.<sup>171</sup> Scarr declared that 'from professional skill and experience, J. S. will undertake to tune piano-fortes, on moderate terms ... Address 89, Pitt-street'.<sup>172</sup>

The next piano-tuning advertisement published in the Sydney press appears a year later, in 1824, in *The Australian* of Thursday, 28 October: Robert Campbell, at '93 George-Street',<sup>173</sup> announced his recent arrival from London, and his intention to open a 'spacious warehouse, on Monday the 1st of November, with the most extensive and elegant assortment of musical instruments and printed music ever imported into this colony'.<sup>174</sup>

By way of conclusion, Campbell states: 'N.B. Piano fortes tuned'.<sup>175</sup>

Robert Campbell's 'spacious warehouse' was Australia's first music shop.

A portrait of the merchant, pastoralist and politician Robert Campbell (1796–1846), painted in 1834 by Charles Rodius (1802–60), depicts him seated near what may be either an upright grand piano or a cabinet piano (Rodius' artwork is not precise enough to allow for a definite identification of instrument type). It must have been relatively easy for Campbell, as a wealthy businessman, to acquire such an expensive and uncommon instrument.<sup>176</sup>

The advantage that ... motivated [the design of the upright grand piano] ... was that the vertical disposition of the soundboard gave a much better sound projection [than the horizontal grand piano]—in short ... [the instrument] was bolder and perceptibly louder ...

When you sat down to play[,] the instrument ... towered above you [2.1 metres was the norm] ... Importantly, in the whole construction [of upright grand and cabinet pianos,] there was no gap or opening needed

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169 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 31 January 1818, Vol. 16 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 2.

170 *Ibid.*

171 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 23 October 1823, Vol. 21 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 5.

172 *Ibid.*

173 *The Australian*, 28 October 1824, No. 3 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 1.

174 *Ibid.*

175 *Ibid.*

176 Upright grand pianos were approximately 10 per cent more expensive than the best horizontal grand pianos.

for the hammers to reach the strings (as in grand or square pianos) ... [Upright grand and cabinet pianos were] therefore potentially much stronger [structurally] than any previous style of piano.<sup>177</sup>

As a result, the tuning stability was greatly improved; as early as 1811, William 'Southwell's patent ... states that his' upright cabinet piano was 'constructed so as to prevent its being so frequently out of tune as pianofortes now generally are'.<sup>178</sup>

In the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 17 March 1825, James Pearson, 'teacher of the piano forte, and professor of thorough bass',<sup>179</sup> lists his piano-tuning charges as:

1. 10s for a square piano
2. 12s 6d for a cabinet piano (a form of upright piano)
3. 15s for a grand piano.<sup>180</sup>

The fact that the first advertisement for piano tuning published in a Sydney newspaper occurs 27 years after George Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur does not necessarily indicate that there was no-one in the colony during this period capable of tuning Elizabeth's instrument. What does become clear from Sydney's early nineteenth-century newspaper advertisements, however, is that during the 1820s and 1830s there were enough pianos in the colony to provide commercial work for professional piano tuners.

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177 Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, pp. 96–7.

178 Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. 271. Patent No. 3419, registered Tuesday, 26 March 1811.

179 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 17 March 1825, Vol. 23 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 1.

180 See *ibid.*

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