

Thoroughbred gold

The 1894

Murrumbidgee Turf Club
Gold Cup

John Hawkins has had a long and abiding interest in Australian made 19th-century gold cups and has written extensively on the subject.¹ Here he announces an important new discovery, the last of the series of Wagga Gold Cups.



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Kilpatrick & Co, retailers; Fischer of Geelong, maker, Wagga Wagga Gold Cup 1876. The illustration is from the *Australasian Sketcher* of 23 December, 1876, p 156 '... the handsome gold cup, value 100 sovereigns presented by Mr. John Cox to the Murrumbidgee Turf Club, and added to the stake of 1,000 guineas, with sweepstakes of 10 sovereigns each, competed for in the race for the Wagga Wagga Gold Cup, held at that town on December 6.' (p 150). The Cup is also illustrated and described as being made 'at the establishment of Messrs. Kilpatrick and Co., 39 Collins Street, Melbourne to the order of Mr. L.S. Joseph of Wagga ... the Cup weighs about 28 ozs., ... on one side of the body is a medallion representing the Wagga Wagga Course and on the other side is a space left for the fortunate winner.' The bands of decoration to the plinth and lid are reminiscent of the work of Fischer of Geelong and the finial is the first of four known examples of the use of this casting by Fischer: 1876 Geelong Gold Cup, drawing and resulting cup - 1876 & 1879; Wagga Wagga Gold Cup - 1890 Geelong Gold Cup, drawing not used; actual 1890 Geelong Gold Cup; 1894 Wagga Wagga Gold Cup.

By this date Walsh Bros. had transferred their allegiance from Edwards to Fischer; perhaps on the evidence of this cup Kilpatrick had done the same. Photograph: J B Hawkins Antiques Reference Library

JOHN HAWKINS

The Murrumbidgee Turf Club is based in Wagga Wagga NSW, and its premier race is the Wagga Cup or, as it was known between 1876 and 1894, the Wagga Gold Cup. The race dates back to 1871, when it was known as the Free Handicap, retaining the name until 1874 when it became, for the first time, the Wagga Cup.

The year 1876 saw the running of the first Wagga Gold Cup when the monetary prize was supplemented by a gold cup, which for the next 14 years was donated by wealthy sportsmen residing in south-western NSW:

Mr. J. Cox, of Mangoplah, presented that of 1876, and, in rotation, Messrs. W. Halliday (Brookong), C. M. Lloyd (Yamma), E. and A. Westby, R. C. Cooper, A. G. Jones, Douglas and Loughnan, F. Chisholm, J. Gormley, H. J. Bowler, G. P. Wilson, R. Cox, and C. F. Bolton, furnished the trophies, and, after a lapse of four years Mr. Francis Foy, of Sydney, provided the last of the gold cups, won by Mr. S. L. West's Taranaki.²

I had illustrated a sketch of the first Wagga Gold Cup of 1876 in my two volume work *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver* (plate 1).³ After the book appeared, in 1993, I was made aware of the existence of the T.T. Jones-retailed Wagga Gold Cup of 1885 (plate 2), donated by James Gormly.⁴

I have now discovered the last of the series, Taranaki's gold cup won in November 1894. So two Wagga Gold Cups have so far avoided the melting pot, out of, I suggest, a total of fourteen made between 1876 and 1894.

The Cup's donor

The 1894 donor, Francis Foy, was the son of Mark Foy (1830–1884) draper of Moystown, King's County, Ireland, son of Marc Foy, a French émigré and flourmiller. Mark was apprenticed to a drapery firm in Dublin, before arriving at Melbourne on the clipper *Champion of the Seas* in 1858. He probably worked first for Buckley & Nunn but in 1859 went to the goldfields, running a butcher's shop at Campbells Creek till 1861 when he moved into a produce store at Castlemaine then to Bendigo in 1873.⁵ From money made on the Victorian



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Wagga Wagga Gold Cup 1885, the earliest surviving cup. *The Wagga Wagga Advertiser* of 1885 described it as 'A cup in the Etruscan (after the ancient Italian civilisation) style.' The Cup, the *Advertiser* wrote: 'is about 20 inches high and has round the upper portion of it a wreath of grape vines bearing fruit and a scroll encircling a jockey's whip and hat, the whole being surmounted by the silver figure of a racehorse with mounted jockey. The weight of the whole is between 26 and 27 ounces. On one side is a shield bearing the inscription "Wagga Wagga Gold Cup, 1885, presented by James Gormly Esq., MLA, won by Minerva". The cup was retailed by T T Jones of Sydney'. Photograph: J B Hawkins Antiques Reference Library

goldfields, Mark Foy opened a Melbourne branch in February 1870, setting up a drapery shop in Smith Street, Collingwood, where he prospered, occupying three shops by 1875 and six by 1880.

His eldest son Francis (1856?–1918), the donor of the gold cup, was born at Kingstown, near Dublin, reaching Melbourne with his mother about 1860:

A high-spirited boy, he drove a bullock-team from Bendigo, to Melbourne and back without mishap. At 18 he ran away to sea and returned to Ireland, where he was a counter-hand with Arnott & Co. Ltd, drapers, in Dublin. After three years he came home and, reconciled to his father, became a partner in his drapery shop at Collingwood. In November 1882 his father settled the business on him and brought in William Gibson as his son's partner. On 21 June 1883 at John's Catholic Church, Heidelberg, Francis married Mary Maud Flanagan (d.1900).

The partnership was dissolved in August 1884 and Francis and Mark moved to Sydney where in 1885 they set up shop in Oxford Street under the style of Mark Foy's, in memory of their late father. Francis established a colourful reputation as a buyer in England and on the Continent by a combination of shrewdness and unorthodoxy: he always bought without a book, later accurately recalling hundreds of transactions to his clerk at his London office. Business flourished and a new store near Hyde Park, modelled partly on Bon Marché in Paris, was opened in 1908: its piazza, chandeliers, marble and sumptuous ballroom made it a Sydney institution and one of Australia's foremost fashion stores. Always the innovator, Foy introduced Sydney's first escalator and motor delivery service. In November 1909 Mark Foy's Ltd was registered as a public company with an authorized capital of £600,000.

A popular, flamboyant turf identity, Foy imported many racehorses from Ireland and England and sent mares to stud in France. His Irish sense of humour showed

in his equine nomenclature; at his stud, The Monastery, near Parkes, His Reverence stood as chief stallion and he called a foal by Something Irish, The Christian Brother. He raced for pleasure: it was said he gave away all his prize money and winnings, and he delighted in donating cups to racing clubs big and small. Each year he went to the Melbourne Cup meeting where he entertained at champagne luncheons—his horse, Voyou, ran second in the 1899 Melbourne Cup. In ill health, suffering for many years from diabetes, in 1918 he went to Melbourne as usual; he said to a bookmaker that he would bet three to one he would not return to Sydney alive. He won that bet, dying in the Melbourne-Sydney express near Goulburn, New South Wales, on 12 November 1918.⁶

In July 1904, his younger brother and business partner, Mark Foy (1865–1950), opened the Hydro Majestic Hotel at Medlow Bath in the Blue Mountains as a hydropathic resort, 'complete with Swiss doctor and spa water from Baden Baden, Germany.' Francis built Maryville, now Springwood, in 1895, later home of Norman Lindsay, so despite the depression of the 1890s the family prospered, building homes and buying gold cups, while all around were suffering.

The cup's maker

The 1894 gold cup bears no maker's punch marks but is engraved to the foot 'Manufactured by Lamborn Bros Melbourne'. Cavill, Cocks and Grace provide the following entry for this firm:

In 1858 William Lamborn joined with Leopold Wagner to establish the firm of Lamborn and Wagner, working jewellers, of Lonsdale Street East, Melbourne ... [becoming] one of the earliest firms of manufacturing jewellers in Australia. Their gold jewellery produced through the 1860s to the 1880s was, in style, comparable to European botanical jewellery of the period ... In the period 1865-1867, William Lamborn and Leopold Wagner were joined by Charles



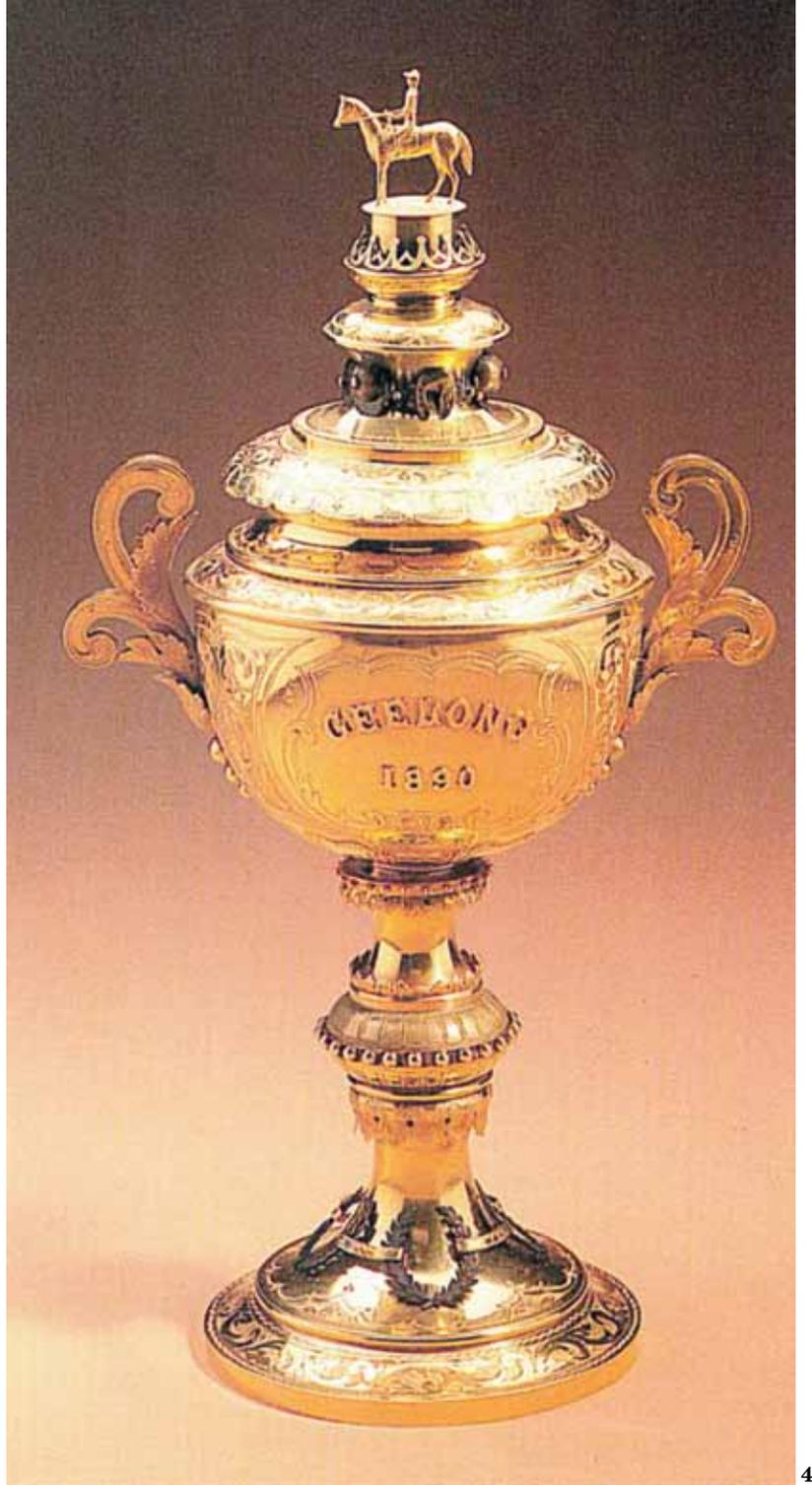
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E. Clarke, goldsmith, the business then being listed as Lamborn, Wagner and Clarke, manufacturing jewellers and goldsmiths of Lonsdale Street East, Melbourne.⁷

Apparently, the partnership between William Lamborn and Leopold Wagner was dissolved in 1885, when William Lamborn senior retired. Two firms were then formed, Lamborn Bros and H.L. Wagner and Co. Of these, Wagner and Co. was not listed beyond 1887. Lamborn Bros continued as manufacturing jewellers under the direction of Arthur L. and William J. Lamborn, occupying the former premises of Lamborn and Wagner at Little Collins Street, Melbourne.⁸

The cup is unlikely to be the product of Lamborn Bros. I suggest that they contracted the making to Edward Fischer & Son at their newly established premises in Little Collins Street, Melbourne; it even has the same casting for the finial as Fischer's Geelong Gold Cups of 1876, 1879 and 1890.⁹



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Frederick Woodhouse (attributed), *Geelong Gold Cup* 1876, drawing from the Fischer Design Archive sold by Christie's in 1991. The Gold Cup was made as drawn, with the cast horse and rider finial. Private collection, photograph J B Hawkins Antiques Reference Library

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Edward Fischer, *Geelong Gold Cup* 1890, h 44.9 cm, with a third usage of the horse and rider finial. Collection Geelong Art Gallery, photograph J B Hawkins Antiques Reference Library



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 Edward Fischer,
 Geelong Gold Cup 1890,
 horse and rider finial.
 Collection Geelong Art
 Gallery, photograph
 J B Hawkins Antiques
 Reference Library

descendants and scripts of pamphlets. Also he was privileged and gifted in silk woven ladies hair art. Especially he was very good at creating flower boxes in all sizes.

Edward's first names were traditionally thought to have been Edward Charles Gunter Fischer. However, at the time of his first marriage to Eliza Basley in Geelong on 2 June 1853, he gave his name as Edward Francis Antoinos. Eliza sadly died giving birth to their son Edward Robert in 1856; like his father and grandfather before him, Edward Robert became a jeweller and is recorded as having worked between 1885 and 1895 in Fitzroy, Richmond and at 41 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Edward senior re-married in 1858 to Sarah Howells. They had eight children; the youngest of them, the only boy Harry, also became a jeweller, working in Emerald Hill in the 1880s. Edward's business at the corner of Ryrie and Bellerine Street, Geelong continued until 1891. He then sold it to Harry Page and moved to Melbourne where he opened a business in Little Collins Street, helped by his son Harry. He continued to run the shop until retiring in 1904.¹¹

The metalwork designs in pencil, ink and watercolour illustrate the extensive variety of goods executed by Fischer's Geelong workshop. Fischer was commissioned to manufacture the Geelong Gold Cups between 1873 and 1890 (**plates 3–5**). Seventeen illustrations relating to the Geelong Gold Cup were included in the collection of drawings. In addition, the collection contained designs for presentation cups covering a wide range of events including other horse races, coursing, rowing, athletics and agriculture, but none for the Wagga Gold Cup. The first Wagga Gold Cup for 1876 (**plate 1**) was ordered from and retailed by Kilpatrick and Co., Melbourne¹² but was in my opinion made by Fischer in Geelong.

In 1991, Christie's sold a 'Highly Important Collection of designs from the Workshop of Edward Fischer, drawn by Frederick Woodhouse Senior. A collection of 98 designs and pattern books in pencil, pen and ink and watercolour from the workshop of Edward Fischer of Geelong, with the majority drawn and designed by Frederick Woodhouse Senior, the important Australian Colonial Artist.'¹⁰

The catalogue entry notes that Edward Fischer was born in March 1828 in Vienna, Austria. His father Edward Casper Fischer, also a jeweller, is recorded in the city of Vienna Index as:

Fischer C registered Flowermaker and Hair Artist. He created all forms of elegant Hair Artist Work for the latest fashions, also bracelets, watch-chains, rings, medallions, pictures in all sizes and sketches of flower bouquets, grave epitaphs, lines of family

The majority of the designs are unsigned with the exception of those initialled or signed by Fischer and one of a nautical cup signed by Louis Kitz.¹³ It is almost certain however, that at least the majority were drawn by Frederick Woodhouse, Senior (1820–1909).¹⁴

Woodhouse was certainly involved in the design of sporting trophies. For example, the *Geelong Advertiser* of 30 July 1873 referred to a silver cup, presented to the Grant and Polwarth Coursing Club by the president Mr J Bell. 'The cup was made by silversmith Edward Fischer of Geelong and was surmounted by a greyhound fabricated from a design by Woodhouse.'

The horse and his owner

Simeon Levi West (1847–1930) of Bogan Gate Station via Parkes was a keen horse breeder.¹⁵ Born in Manchester, he arrived in NSW about 1870, was involved in the timber industry before taking up two grazing properties, Botfield near Trundle and Bogan Gate. He died aged 83 at his Granville home in 1930, survived by one son and ten daughters.

West's horse Tradition finished second in the 1888 Melbourne Cup, a length and a half behind Mentor.¹⁶ In the 1894 Melbourne Cup, his stallion and accomplished stayer Taranaki ran ninth behind Patron;¹⁷ the following year, Taranaki finished well back when Auraria won.¹⁸

West had shown Taranaki as a three year old stallion at the Forbes Show in 1892.¹⁹ Taranaki went to Melbourne in 1894, winning the Aspendale Handicap in October and the Williamstown Cup in November, both wins attracting weight penalties.

After the 1894 Flemington meeting, West took Taranaki to Wagga Wagga for the Gold Cup, run eight days after the Melbourne Cup. A brief newspaper report noted 'The Wagga Cup this year was worth £100. A gold cup, valued at £100, presented by Mr. F. Foy, of Sydney, was added. Taranaki, the winner, carried 8st 13lb.'²⁰ Another provincial newspaper account is more enlightening:

Taranaki scored a very easy victory in the Wagga Cup on Wednesday [14 Nov]. Mr West's horse carried 9st 6lb, having to put up a penalty of 7lb for his Williamstown Cup win, and he covered the mile and a half in 2 min 41sec. Taranaki started an equal favourite with Roseleaf at 3 to 1.²¹



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The Murrumbidgee Turf Club's Wagga Wagga Gold Cup of 1894. The engraver managed to get the direction in which the horses run in New South Wales correct. In Victoria the horses run anti-clockwise but in New South Wales they run clockwise, as engraved. Photograph: JB Hawkins Antiques Reference Library



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Wagga Gold Cup 1894,
detail of engraving
and maker's mark.
Photograph:
JB Hawkins Antiques
Reference Library

Taranaki was the grandson of Yattendon, the winner of the first, English-made, Sydney Gold Cup of 1866 and one of Australia's greatest sires. Retired to stud near Albury, Taranaki died in 1903.²²

I purchased the 1894 Wagga Gold Cup (plate 6) from the great grandson of the owner of the winning horse Taranaki, the cup having descended in his family through the female line. Four out of eighteen 19th century Geelong Gold Cups are known to have survived and now two out of fourteen Wagga Wagga Gold Cups. On the law of averages, I would expect another to surface in the future.

John Hawkins is a leading Australian antique dealer now based in northern Tasmania, and a regular contributor to *Australiana*.

Notes

- 1 J B Hawkins, 'Australian Secular Gold Cups and Presentation Pieces', *Australian Antique Collector* 35, 1987, 54-60; revised, *World of Antiques & Art* 60 December 2000, 12-17 lists all surviving Australian gold cups and those known from the records. J B Hawkins, 'Glittering Prizes', *Collectors Annual Bicentennial Edition 1988*, itemises the history of all known examples of the Geelong Gold Cups between 1874 and 1889.
- 2 'The Turf. An Historic Cup', *SMH* 16 April 1913 p 4.
- 3 J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, Woodbridge UK 1990, pl 222.
- 4 'Gormly, James' *ADB online*.
- 5 'Mark Foy', *ADB online*.
- 6 'Foy, Francis and Mark', *ADB online*.
- 7 C. E. Clarke may have been Qwist's partner in Sydney in the making of the 1861 Intercolonial

Cricket Club Cup. See J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, 129-130

- 8 K. Cavill, G. Cocks and J. Grace, *Australian Jewellers*, Roseville 1993, 143-145.
- 9 J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, colour pl 40, also Christie's Sydney 1994 the 1879 Cup, \$143,000.
- 10 Christie's Melbourne, 25-26 Nov 1991, lot 461.
- 11 J B Hawkins, *Nineteenth Century Australian Silver*, 294-315.
- 12 'The very handsome gold cup presented by Mr. John Cox for the winner of the Wagga Wagga Cup was exhibited yesterday in the shop of Messrs. Kilpatrick and Co, Collins. Street, by whom it was manufactured. The money value of this race will be greater than that of any race in Australia; for, besides the sweepstakes of 10 sovs. each, the club gives 1,000 guineas of added money. The handsome gold cup now on view is a very fitting memorial of such an important race. The cup weighs 28oz and the style is the Italian Renaissance. The body is very handsomely chased with scrolls. The handles are very graceful in form, and the leaves attached to them are well designed. On one side of the body is a medallion representing the Wagga Wagga course, and on the other is a space left for the name of the fortunate winner. The lid of the cup is surmounted with well-executed figures of a horse and jockey.' *Argus* 23 Aug 1876 p 5.
- 13 For Kitz see *Australiana* 30 no 2, May 2008, 33-38.
- 14 Colin Laverty, *Australian Colonial Sporting Painter, Frederick Woodhouse and Sons*, p 32.
- 15 *SMH* 19 June 1930 p 15.
- 16 *Argus* 7 Nov 1888 p 9.
- 17 *SMH* 13 Aug 1892 p 10; *Argus* 7 Nov 1894 p 6.
- 18 *Argus* 6 Nov 1895 p 6.
- 19 *SMH* 13 Aug 1892 p 10
- 20 *Barrier Miner* 17 Nov 1894 p 2.
- 21 *Launceston Examiner* 17 Nov 1894 p 6.
- 22 *Adelaide Register* 21 Feb 1903 p 5