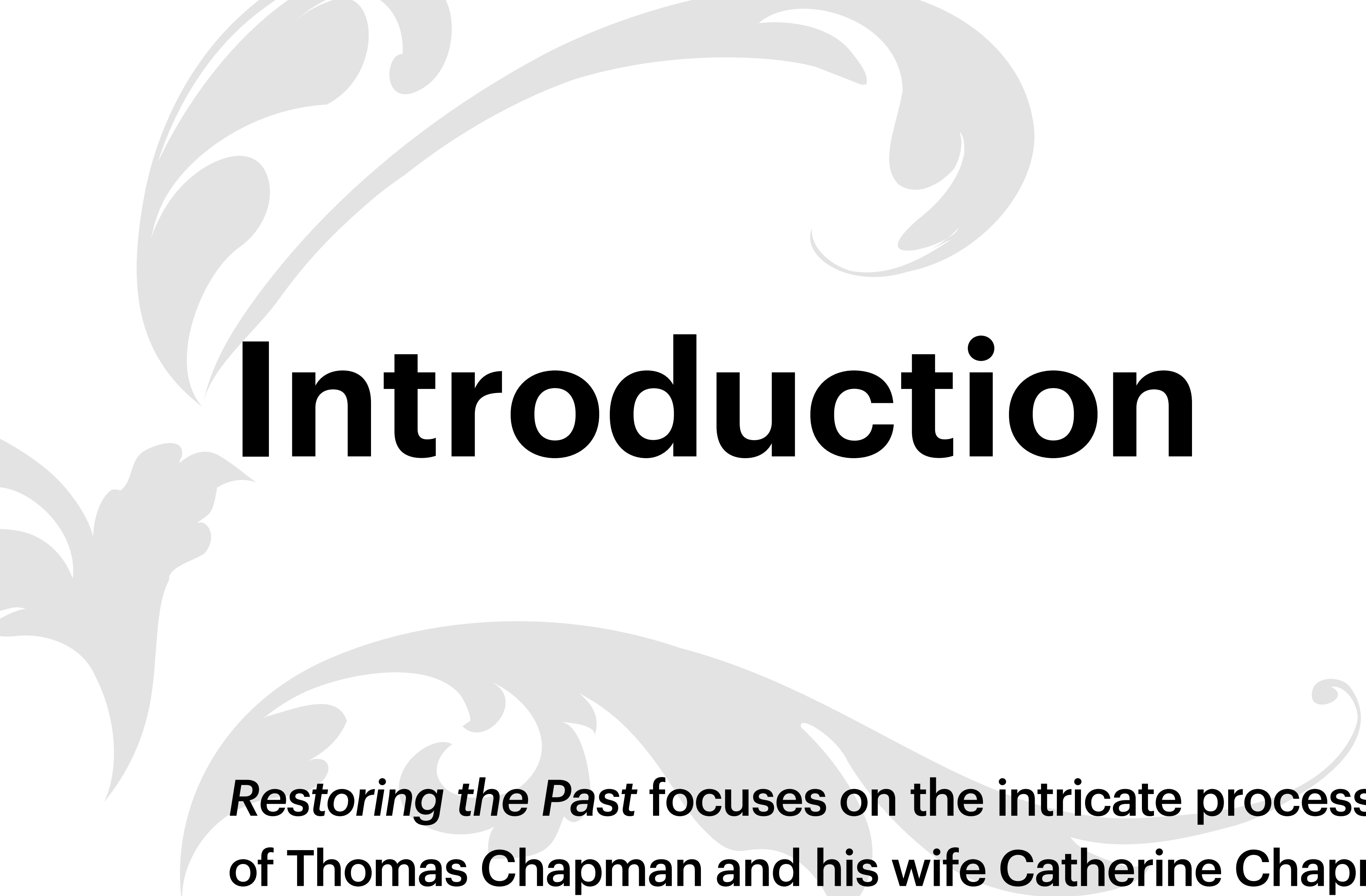




Introduction

Restoring the Past focuses on the intricate process of conserving two nineteenth century portraits of Thomas Chapman and his wife Catherine Chapman. These portraits, painted by Conway Hart, are rich in historical and cultural value, and have undergone a transformation that revitalizes their aesthetic appeal and preserves them for future generations. Through this exhibition, visitors may gain a deeper understanding of the skills required to preserve cultural heritage and the stories these artworks continue to tell.

The paintings are significant due to their portrayal of the sitters as aspirational leaders of their time. Presented in beautiful, ornate frames made by local frame maker Robin Lloyd Hood, the paintings hung in the family home of Sunnyside, New Town.

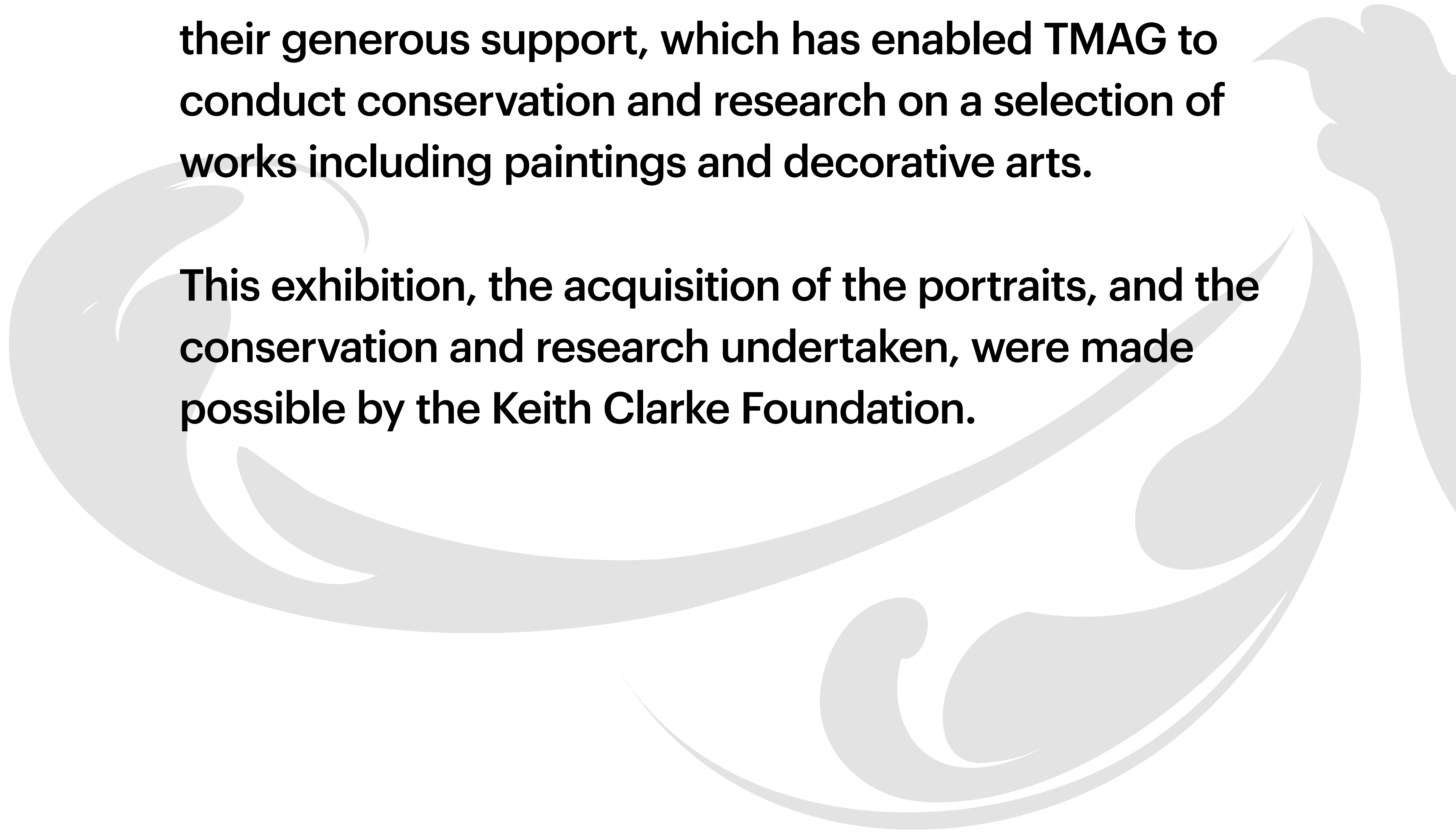


Acknowledgements

Keith Clarke Foundation

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) would like to thank the Keith Clarke Foundation for their generous support, which has enabled TMAG to conduct conservation and research on a selection of works including paintings and decorative arts.

This exhibition, the acquisition of the portraits, and the conservation and research undertaken, were made possible by the Keith Clarke Foundation.





Conservation treatment

The video shows the work undertaken by the conservation team over the past twelve months. The treatments are designed to restore the paintings and frames in line with the original intentions of the artist and frame maker, while retaining the history and age of the artworks.

Cleaning the painted surfaces removed years of accumulated dirt, revealing rich colours. At some point in their lifetime, the artworks suffered from water damage meaning they could not be displayed. The flaking paint was stabilized with adhesives and pressure, while paint losses were filled with putty. Canvas distortions and tenting paint were flattened with humidification and weights. Surface coatings were applied to enhance and saturate the rich colours, and paint retouching was performed to integrate the fills and reduce distracting craquelure.

Through meticulous treatment, the frames retained their spectacular, yet fragile, gilded surfaces. Loose composition ornamentation and flaking gilding were consolidated with adhesives. Gentle mechanical cleaning and applications of aqueous solutions revealed the original gilding obscured by layers of grime. Finally, the lost ornamentation was recreated by moulding and casting fills, which were then retouched with paint and gilding.



Detail (reproduction)
Conway Weston Hart (1814–1864)
Catherine Chapman (1822–1896)
c. 1856
oil on canvas
Purchased with funds from the Keith Clarke
Foundation Pty Ltd, 2024
AG9181

Sunnyside, New Town

Thomas Daniel Chapman was an important figure in Tasmania's early political history playing a significant role in establishing self-government for the colony and opposing the transportation of convicts. In 1843 Thomas married Catherine Swan at St David's Church, Nipaluna/Hobart Town. Together they had nine children including five sons and four daughters.

In 1851 Thomas became an elected member of the Legislative Council and lobbied for a new constitution and self-government of the colony. He was successful in the elections for the first House of Assembly and subsequently held the office of Treasurer in three ministries. Chapman was the Premier of Tasmania in 1861–1863 during a time of economic uncertainty and falling revenue. After readjusting tariffs which resulted in cheaper groceries, he was given the nickname of 'Tea and Sugar Tommy.'

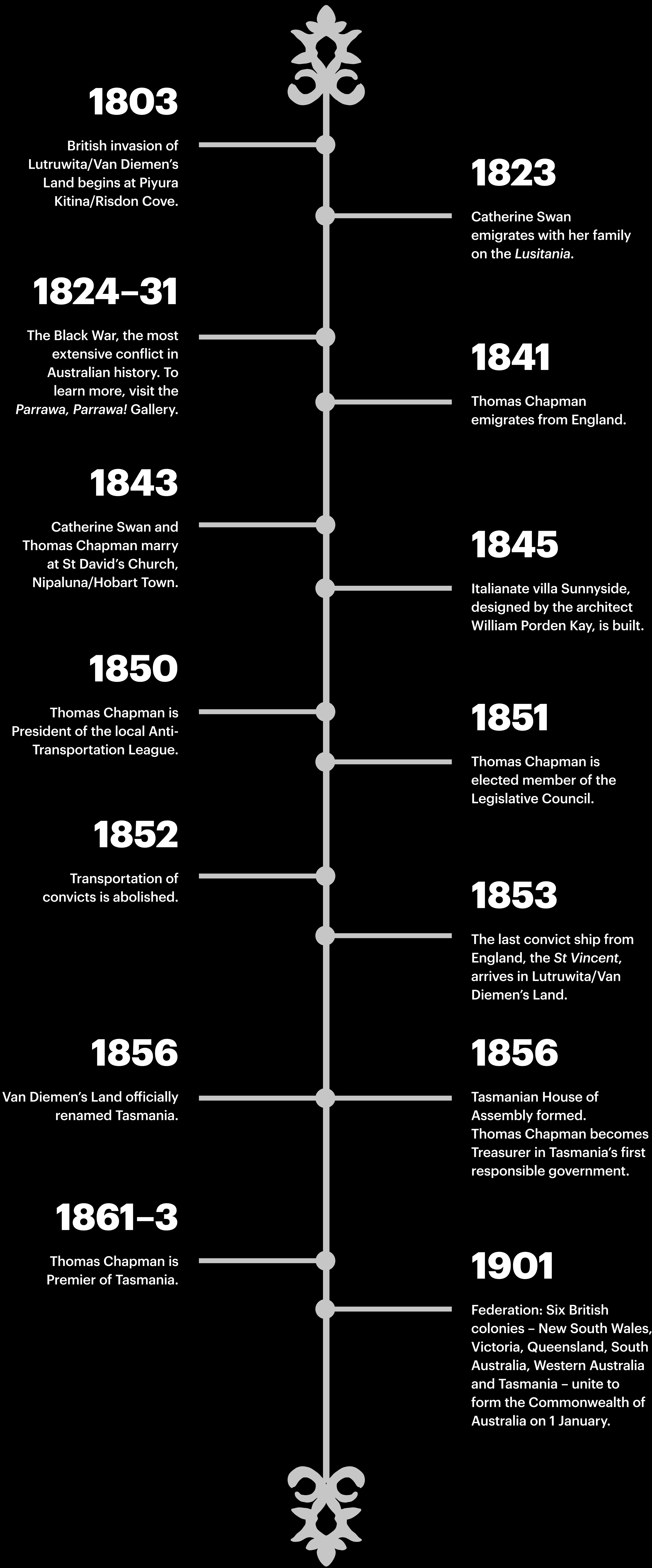
The portraits were displayed with an English landscape by John Glover at the Chapman's home 'Sunnyside'. The John Glover painting displayed is of a similar theme. Built in 1845, 'Sunnyside' was an Italianate villa commissioned by Thomas Chapman and designed by the colonial architect William Porden Kay. This spectacularly veneered tilt-top table was made for the villa by William Hamilton, an Irish furniture maker.

Conway Weston Hart is best known for his portraits of wealthy Tasmanian and Victorian colonists that were painted between 1850 and 1861, and many of his paintings were framed by the Hood family.

Unknown artist
Interior side view of "Sunnyside" dining room
1880
Photograph reproduction
Tasmanian Archives
PH30-1-2086



Timeline



Hood's Corner

Robin Vaughan Hood emigrated from London in 1833, bringing masterful trade and design skills as a carver, gilder and picture framer. Successive members of the Hood family contributed greatly to the development of early artistic, business and cultural life in Nipaluna/Hobart Town. In fact, during the mid to late 1900s the intersection of Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets was known as 'Hood's Corner' due to the number of family businesses in the area. Robin Lloyd Hood was apprenticed under his father, eventually taking over the family business in 1851.

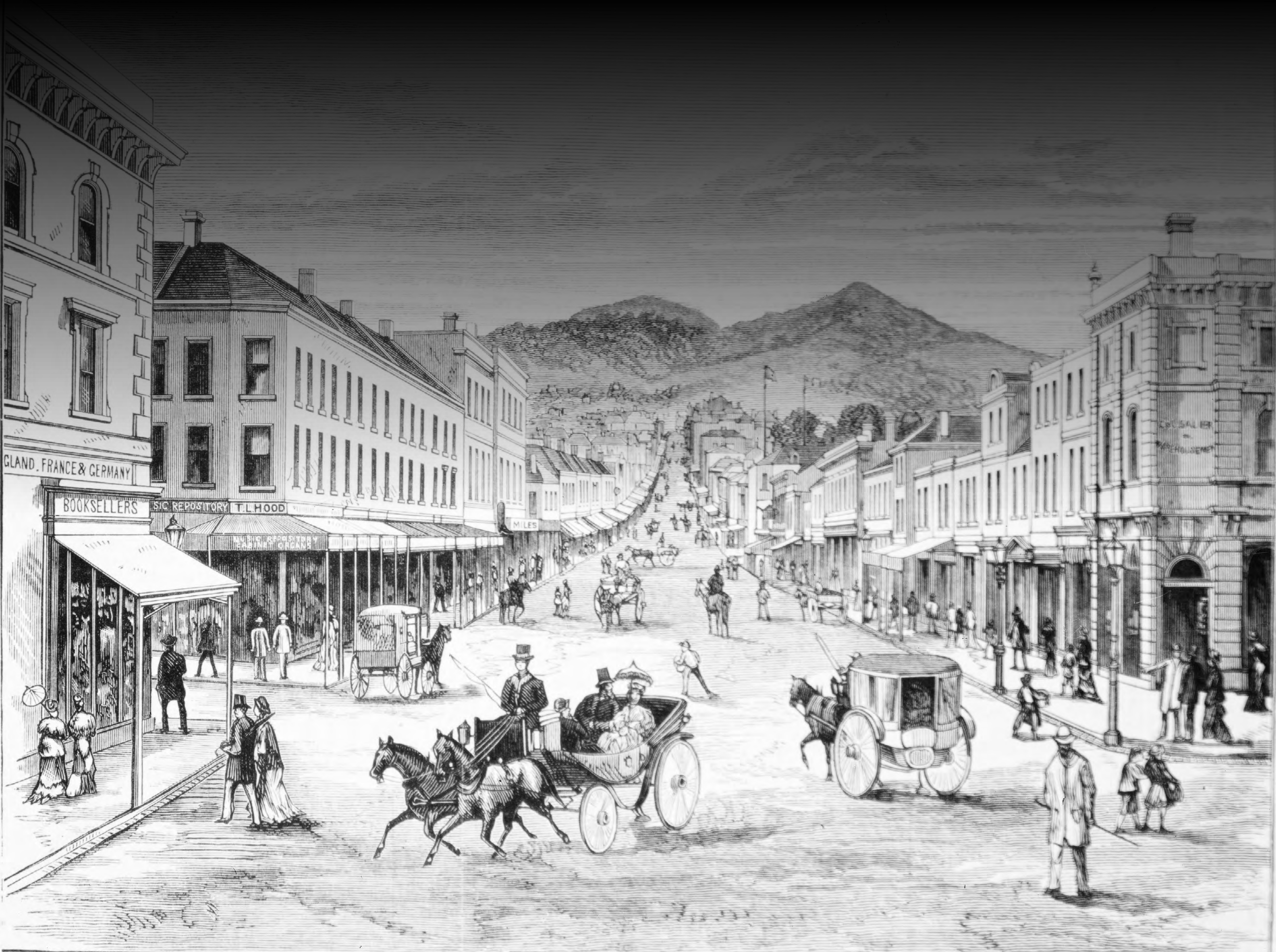
The identities of frame makers are often lost, however, a label on the back of Catherine Chapman's frame confirms that Robin Lloyd Hood manufactured both frames for the portraits in this exhibition.

Staff at the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery in Launceston constructed the display case of casts made from original Hood frames.



Label on verso of frame
Conway Weston Hart (1814-1864)
Catherine Chapman (1822-1896)
c. 1856
oil on canvas
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Pty Ltd, 2024
AG9181

Unknown artist
Corner Elizabeth and Macquarie Streets showing TL Hood's Music Repository [Copy of illustration labelled 'Liverpool Street, Hobart Town, 1870-80, printed in Australian Sketcher, July 24 1880']
1880
Tasmanian Archives, E. R. Pretymann Collection
NS1013/1/4



LIVERPOOL-STREET, HOBART TOWN.

1870. 1880



Robin Vaughan Hood

Arrival, 27 June 1833, Nipaluna/Hobart Town
aboard the *Warrior* along with his family;
Occupation listed as 'Carpenter'.

Occupation: Lithographer, carpenter, carver, gilder, frame maker, restaurateur.

Proprietor of "New Exhibition Rooms Picture Gallery" and "City Restaurant".

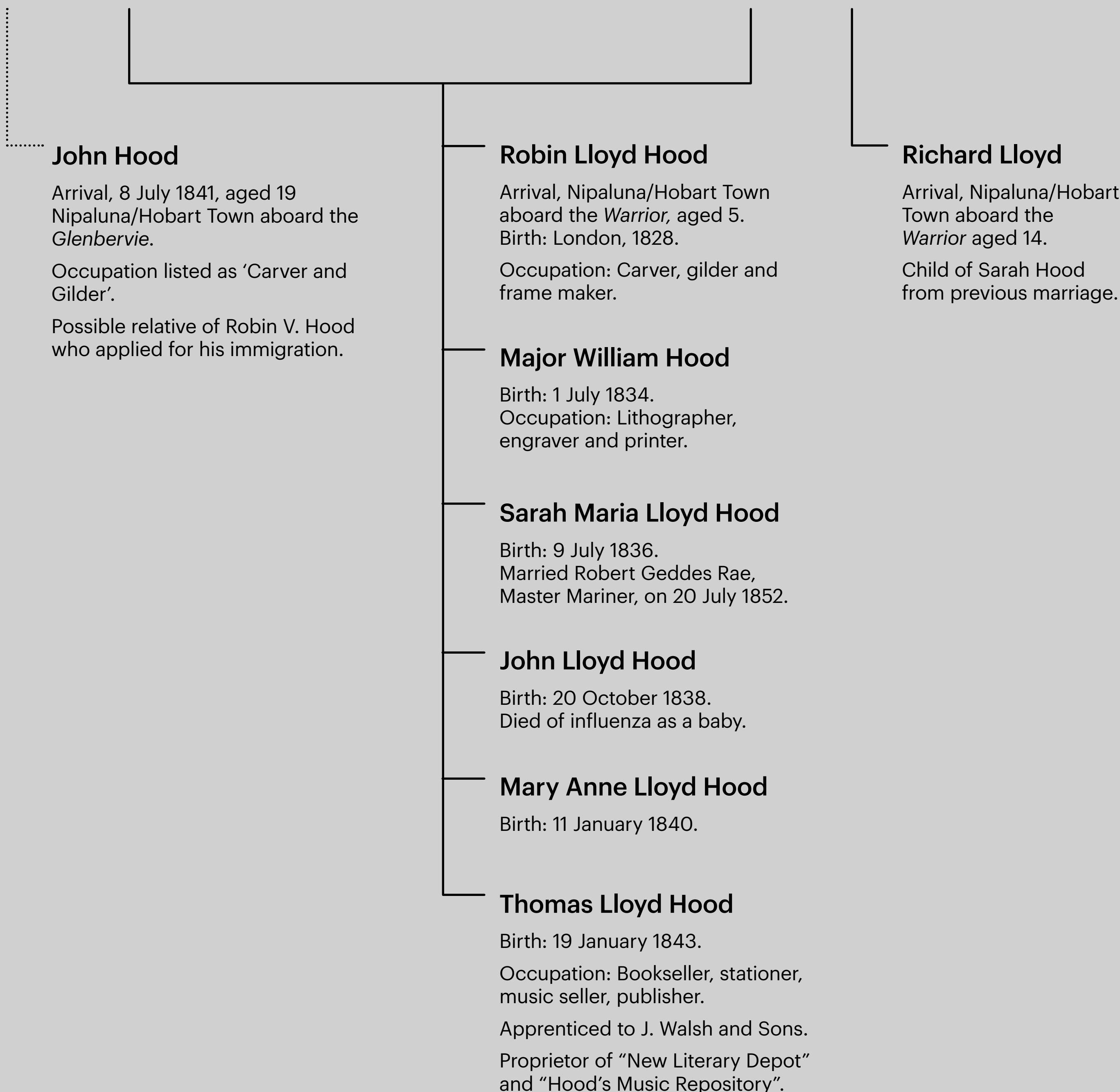
Award: Bronze medal at Great Exhibition, London, 1851.



Sarah Lloyd Hood

Arrival, 27 June 1833, Nipaluna/Hobart Town aboard the *Warrior* along with her family.

Birth: c. 1802 (?) Framington, Hereford, UK.
Death: 1859 Nipaluna/Hobart Town.



John Hood

Arrival, 8 July 1841, aged 19
Nipaluna/Hobart Town aboard the
Glenbervie.

Occupation listed as 'Carver and Gilder'.

Possible relative of Robin V. Hood
who applied for his immigration.

Robin Lloyd Hood

Arrival, Nipaluna/Hobart Town
aboard the *Warrior*, aged 5.
Birth: London, 1828.

Occupation: Carver, gilder and frame maker.

Richard Lloyd

Arrival, Nipaluna/Hobart
Town aboard the
Warrior aged 14.

Child of Sarah Hood
from previous marriage.

Major William Hood

Birth: 1 July 1834.
Occupation: Lithographer,
engraver and printer.

Sarah Maria Lloyd Hood

Birth: 9 July 1836.
Married Robert Geddes Rae,
Master Mariner, on 20 July 1852.

John Lloyd Hood

Birth: 20 October 1838.
Died of influenza as a baby.

Mary Anne Lloyd Hood

Birth: 11 January 1840.

Thomas Lloyd Hood

Birth: 19 January 1843.

Occupation: Bookseller, stationer,
music seller, publisher.

Apprenticed to J. Walsh and Sons.

Proprietor of "New Literary Depot"
and "Hood's Music Repository".

WP Dowling (c. 1824-77)
Portrait of Robin Vaughan
Hood (reproduction)
1851
oil on canvas
Gift of Mr and Mrs EPT
Simpson through the family
of William Percy Hood and the
QVMAG Arts Foundation, 1997
QVM:1997:FP:0038

WP Dowling (c. 1824–77)
Portrait of Sarah Lloyd Hood
(reproduction)
1851
oil on canvas
Gift of Mr and Mrs EPT
Simpson through the family
of William Percy Hood and the
QVMAG Arts Foundation, 1997
QVM:1997:FP:0037