

NEW [acquisitions]

Tichborne Claimant pressed glass plate

The Tichborne plate is part of the David Westcott Collection and is a small shallow clear pressed glass plate featuring a portrait of Arthur Orton. The text around the underside edge of the plate reads, 'Would you be surprised to find that this is Tichborne'. The plate was manufactured to commemorate the famous 'Tichborne Claimant' trial that took place between 1872 and 1874.

Arthur Orton, alias Thomas Castro (1834–1898), was a butcher from Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, who travelled to England in 1866 claiming that he was the long-lost son of Sir Roger Tichborne of the Tichborne family. Sir Roger Tichborne was a baronet and heir to the Tichborne estates. In 1854, he had set sail from South America on a

ship bound for Jamaica and was thought to have been lost at sea.

When Arthur Orton arrived in England, claiming he was Sir Roger Tichborne, he was accepted by Lady Tichborne but other family members were not convinced. Following the death of Lady Tichborne, the case went to trial and there ensued the longest and most expensive case in British legal history. The claimant was finally convicted of perjury and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment. However, when Arthur Orton died in 1898, the Tichborne family consented to him being buried in the Tichborne vaults as Roger Tichborne, once again highlighting the ambiguity surrounding his true identity.



photo: George Serras

The case captured people's imagination in both Britain and Australia. The Australian people were fascinated by the case, intrigued that a man from the Antipodes could rise to become an English baronet. The case inspired songs, skits and novels and entered popular culture through comics, games, toys and figurines. The Tichborne plate is a rare and interesting memento of an intriguing story in Australian 19th-century legal and social history.

Cheryl Crilly
Land and People program

Pack saddle

John Swain spent many years living and working in the Snowy Mountains region of New South Wales. This pack saddle was used by Charles Carter, a brumby trapper and miner who led a solitary life in the Snowy Mountains for most of the period between 1898 and 1952, the year of his death. It was displayed in the Swains' restaurant 'Bescamp' throughout the 1970s until 1982.

Charles Carter arrived in the Snowy region in 1898, almost 40 years after the rush for gold at Kiandra, at a time when the mountains supported extensive pastoralism. He owned land on the Ingeegoodbee River and later lived as a hermit in a remote southern part of the mountains, near Mount Pilot close to the Victorian border. Carter made a living in various ways – he mined gold and tin and was a rabbit, dingo and brumby trapper. He also developed what he believed to be a cure for cancer from crushed tin ore (bluestone). Carter wrote several books on topics of spirituality, social welfare and politics, namely *War Finance, No Problem* (1917), *The Judgment, or, The Only Way* (1919) and *The Principle of Life, or, the Reconciliation* (c. 1923) which are all held by the National Library of Australia.

The pack saddle is a unique item which Charles Carter appears to have handcrafted. It still holds his personal belongings and tools of his trade as a trapper (crockery, pocket knife, spare leather bridle and horseshoe). The saddle was restored by Jack Pendergast around 1970. Jack added some items to the saddle after Charles Carter's death to show the type of items he would have carried 'on the track'.

The saddle is significant as one of the few possessions belonging to Carter, who became somewhat of a local identity due to his elusive behaviour, his clashes with neighbours over land use and stock ownership, his eccentric pursuit of a cure for cancer and his published manifestos on political and social issues. His pack saddle also speaks of a self-sufficient lifestyle in the remote parts of the Snowy Mountains and the importance of brumby trapping in the region in economic, social and environmental terms.

Jane Carter
Land and People program

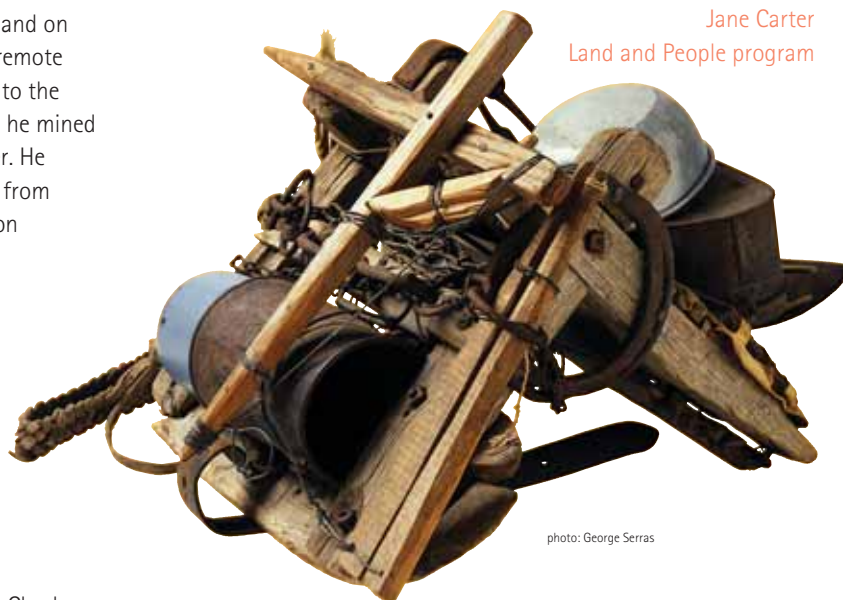


photo: George Serras