

The John Arrowsmith Australian Maps Project

Dorothy F. Prescott

Background

John Arrowsmith (1790–1873) was an important English cartographer, especially for Australians. A member of a family of geographers, his production focused on mapping British colonies around the world at a scale that surpassed that of any other contemporary map maker. Additionally, he had access to the very latest despatches received at the Colonial Office and the British Admiralty, which formed the source for many of his productions. His work covers the period 1832 to 1862.

The John Arrowsmith Australian Maps Project, www.asmp.esrc.unimelb.edu.au, is a website hosted by the eScholarship Research Centre of the University of Melbourne Library. It was launched in July 2012 at a tri-organisation cartographic meeting held in Brisbane. The website provides links to maps of Australia included in John Arrowsmith's *London atlas of universal geography*, which went through at least eight editions between 1834 and 1858.¹ These maps are found in various collections around the world, and in issues of the continuation of Arrowsmith's atlas: *Stanford's London atlas of universal geography*. Edward Stanford (1856–1917) purchased John Arrowsmith's copyright, plates and stock at auction after

Arrowsmith's death, the amended title for the *London atlas* indicating his ownership.

The website is based on the method of comparative cartography, in which numerous copies of a map title are compared and differences between them are noted. This enables seemingly identical maps to be arranged in chronological order of creation and publication. On the website, the date given for any state of a map title is the actual date portrayed, which may be different from the purported publication date printed on the map.

Map titles and states

The result of this study indicates that not all copies that appear to be identical actually are. One can say with assurance that Arrowsmith issued and reissued map titles without updating or indicating to the purchaser that a map had been amended in one way or another. Collectors and libraries need to be aware of this fact when investing in an Arrowsmith map, to ensure they are not acquiring something they already hold. In addition to being in the *London atlas*, individual maps were available from stock, and some titles appear in books and government publications.

If two maps are different they are classified on the website as different

states of the same title. There may be time gaps between states, suggesting that other undiscovered states exist.

The *Oxford English dictionary* definition of the word 'state' includes the following: 'An etched or engraved plate at a particular stage of its progress'. Another definition is:

An issue of a map which differs in some way from all other issues of the same map. On each occasion when the copper plate is altered, either by the addition or removal of information, a new state of the map is produced. The use of the term 'edition' applies only to books but not to maps.²

The website's structure allows for the future interpolation of yet undiscovered states of each of the 13 map titles depicting Australia that occur in copies of the *London atlas* found to date. Each map title has been treated like the chapter of a book, under which will be found a list of the states of that particular title. The list of states for each map starts with a summary of the history of that particular map title, followed by links to each of the states of that title. Each state shows a description of that state, institutional holdings, published resources, associated persons and images. Each state is described and

Henry William Pickersgill, Portrait of John Arrowsmith, c. 1820, oil on canvas, 76.0 × 63.5 cm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.



the differences between the states are noted in detail. There are further links to persons mentioned in a map, many of these being to entries in the *Australian dictionary of biography*, which has also been published online. The work continues and the website will be added to in the future.

Arrowsmith's Australian maps

Research to date has found 13 map titles in the *London atlas* that relate to Australia. Two additional maps have been included on the website (and in the list below) as they are the earlier states of the *Maritime portion of South Australia* and of *Map and chart of the west coast of Australia from Swan River to Shark Bay*, but have not been found in any edition of the *London atlas*. The titles of these two earlier maps are *A new map of South Australia* and *Australia, Swan River to Shark Bay* respectively. The full list is as follows:

- *Map of the discoveries in Australia*
- *Van Diemen's Land*
- *Discoveries in Western Australia*
- *Eastern portion of Australia*
- *Australia from surveys made by order of the British Government*
- *Maritime portion of South Australia*

- *The south eastern portion of Australia*
- *The colony of Western Australia*
- *Cockburn Sound*
- *King George's Sound*
- *The district of Adelaide, South Australia*
- *Map and chart of the west coast of Australia*
- *South Australia shewing the division into counties of the settled portions of the province*
- *A new map of South Australia*
- *Australia, from Swan River to Shark Bay*

Each of these titles has been investigated in depth by comparing all available copies, one with another. Examples of map imprints show us that Arrowsmith might reissue a map without any change whatsoever to the internal content. The map *Van Diemen's Land* is a classic example of reissue without any change or updating of map content throughout its life. Six issues have been found, which bear imprints from 1832 to 1842. All are identical in content with only the date in the imprint altering, and, in the case of the first issue, its plate number differs from the later issues.

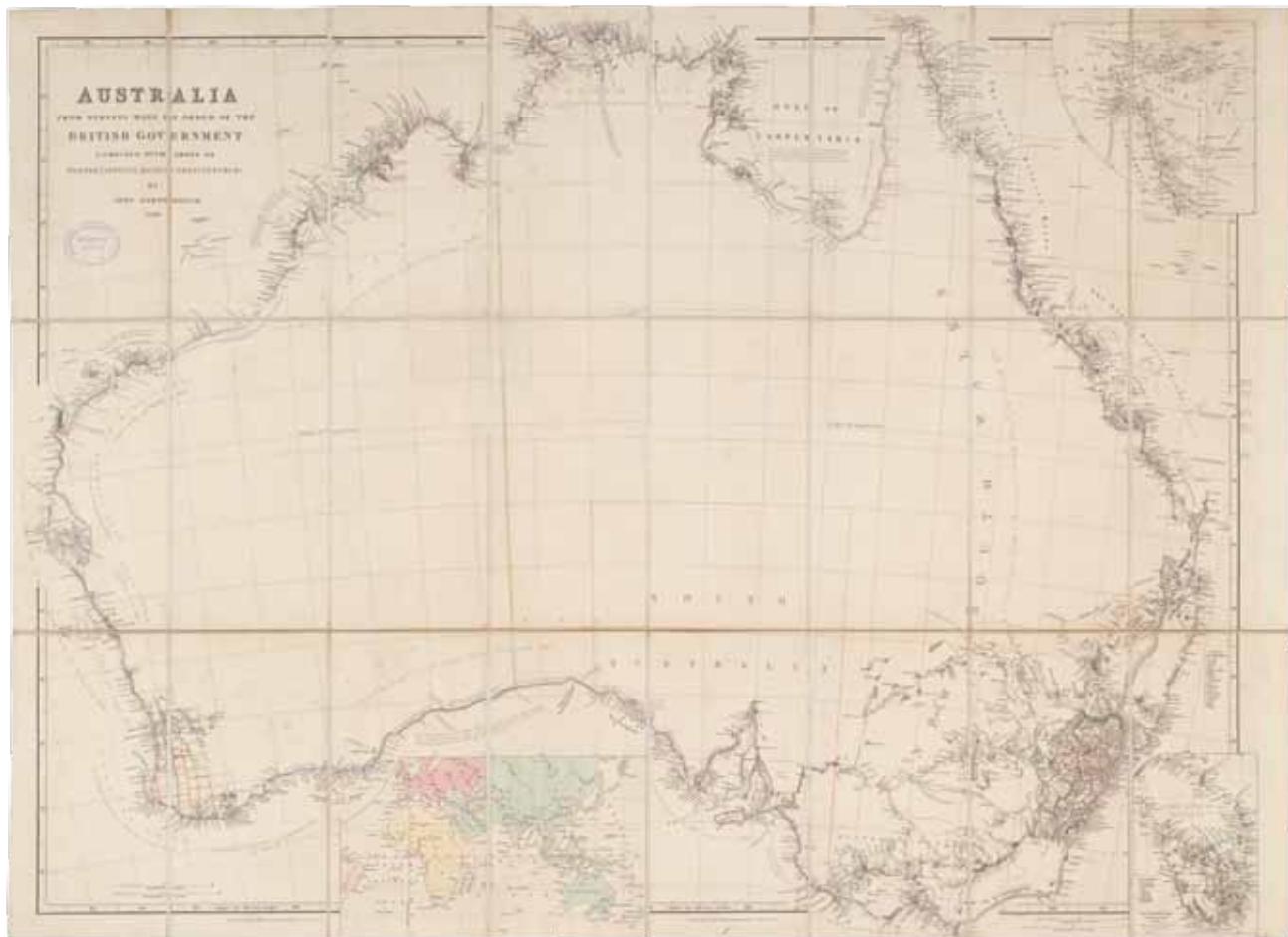
Alternatively, Arrowsmith might reissue a map, having made changes to the internal content, but

not indicate this by updating the issue date to reflect the changes. An example of this kind can be seen in the early issues of his *Eastern portion of Australia*, which is the right-hand sheet of two sheets covering the continent. Five issues dated '1838' have been found and no doubt more exist, but the last two states of this purported date are at least 1840, and possibly later, in content.

The maps reflect the progress of exploration of the continent by the British, after arriving in what became Sydney in January 1788 to establish a penal settlement. By 1832 John Arrowsmith was documenting the process of discovery and exploration through large-scale mapping. A comparison of his 1838 map of the continent (illustrated page 36) with his 1862 issue (illustrated page 37) is dramatic.

For the first issue of his *London atlas* (1834), John Arrowsmith included three (out of 50) plates on Australia, all focused on discovery and exploration: *Map of the discoveries in Australia* (plate 35), *Discoveries in Western Australia* (plate 36), (illustrated page 38) and *Van Diemen's Land* (plate 37). These three maps show the extent of British exploration in the southern part of the continent after almost 50 years of British occupation.

John Arrowsmith, *Australia from surveys made by order of the British government combined with those of d'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet, &c, &c*, London: John Arrowsmith, 1 May 1838
(state 1838/1), hand-coloured engraved map, sectioned and mounted on linen, 59.0 × 83.2 cm.
MAP RM 782C, National Library of Australia.



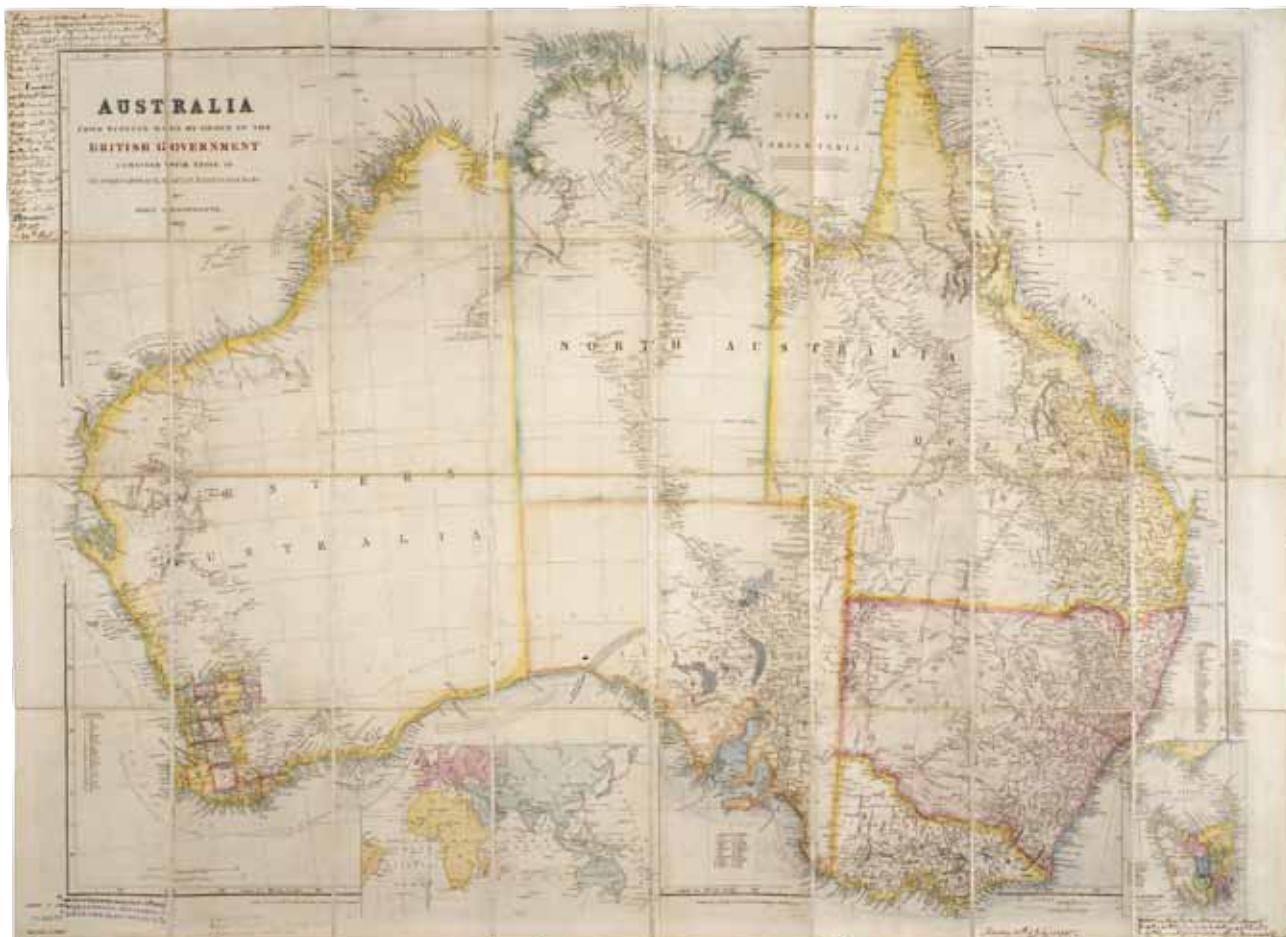
From this point onwards the *London atlas* became a bespoke publication, tailored to the requirements of the purchaser. The contents page remained unchanged through the life of the publication,

even though the number of plates increased over time. These atlases should therefore be treated as individual publications for the purposes of cataloguing, because both the number of plates they

contain and the individual titles included will vary from copy to copy.

By the time Arrowsmith's *London atlas* title page recorded '1838' as the date of publication, the new and revised Australian plates were

John Arrowsmith, *Australia from surveys made by order of the British government combined with those of d'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet, &c., &c.*, London: John Arrowsmith, 1 January 1862 (state 1862/2), hand-coloured engraved map printed in two overlapping sheets, sectioned and mounted on linen, 64.0 × 84.0 cm. Z/MC 804/1862/1, Mitchell Library Map Collection, State Library of New South Wales.



appearing. To the original three plates for the continent may be added a further three: *Australia from surveys made by order of the British government combined with those of D'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet &c., &c.; Eastern*

portion of Australia and The maritime portion of South Australia. The first issues of all three maps record 1838 as the first date of issue, the west and east halves of the map of Australia being issued on the same date—

1 May 1838—while the *Maritime portion of South Australia* appeared on 5 June 1838. This was quickly followed by the first issue of *The south eastern portion of Australia in August 1838, The district of Adelaide,*

Below: John Arrowsmith, *Discoveries in Western Australia* (state 1833/6; imprint 1838/1) from *Returns to two addresses of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 26 June and 3 August 1838, for: 1, copies of, or extracts from, a statistical report of the colony of Western Australia ...*, London: House of Commons, 1838. UniM Bail SpC/AX f 994.1 E58, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

Opposite: The district of Adelaide, South Australia: As divided into country sections from the trigonometrical surveys of Colonel Light late Survr Genl. (state 1839/5), from *Third annual report of the Colonization Commissioners for South Australia to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary for the Colonies*, 1838, London: 13 May 1839, map following p. 60, or page 456 of *The sessional papers of the House of Lords*, vol. 25, 1839, Reports from Commissioners. UniM Bund SpC/BX f 328.41 GREA, v. 25, 1839, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.



South Australia in February 1839 (illustrated opposite) and *The colony of Western Australia* in October 1839. Obviously bespoke items are the two charts on one sheet entitled *Cockburn Sound / King George's Sound* and a further chart of the west coast entitled *Map and chart of the west coast of Australia*. These last two titles occur in only one particular copy of the atlas in each case. The final Australian map title to be added to the atlas, *South Australia shewing the division into*

counties of the settled portions, came very late in the last (1858) edition of the *London atlas* produced during Arrowsmith's lifetime.

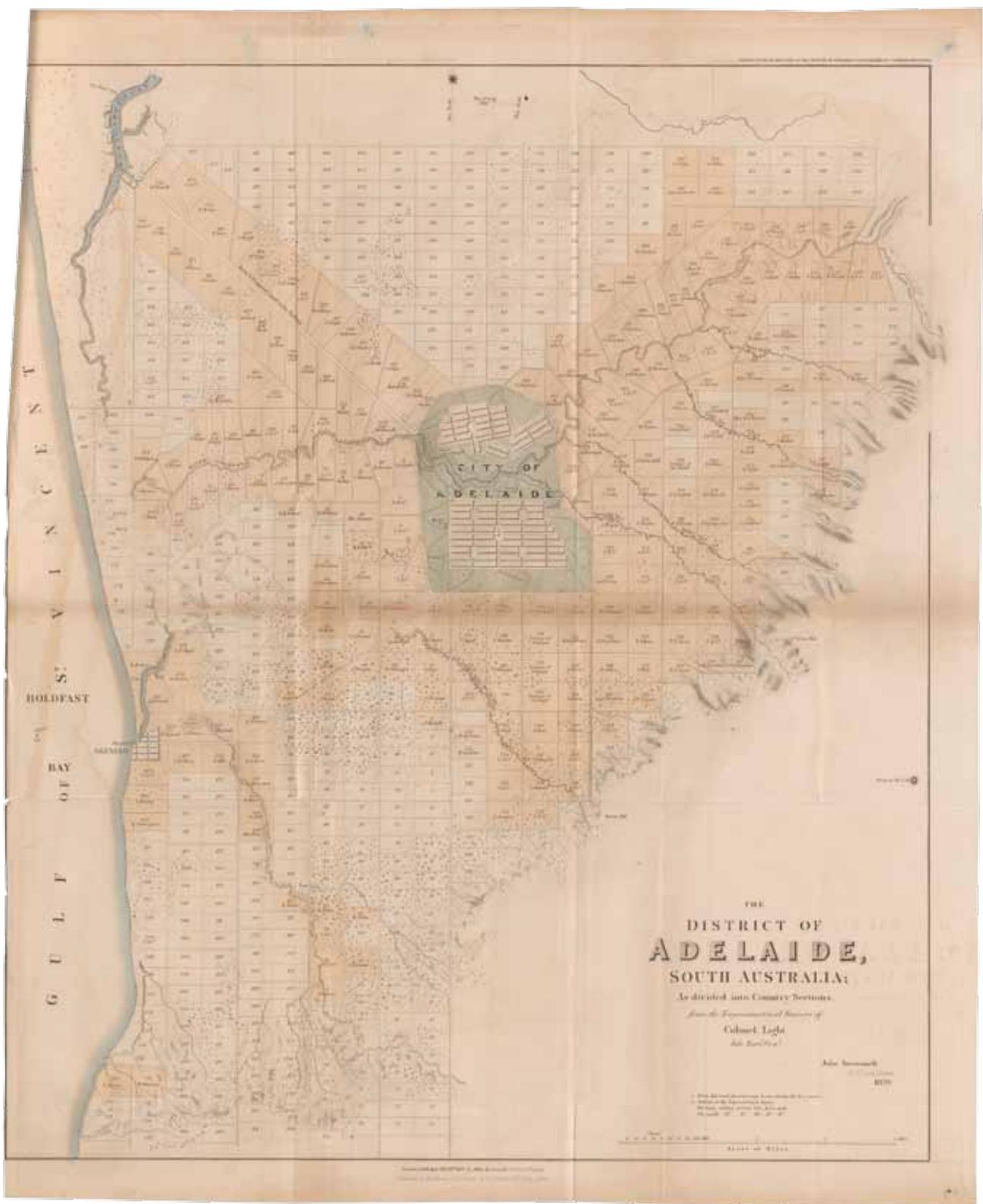
Research to date has covered 13 of the map titles that occur in the *London atlas*. The University of Melbourne Library holds one copy of the complete atlas (1847) and nine of the 13 titles: four titles (five states) in the Map Collection in the Eastern Resources Centre and six titles (eleven states) in Special Collections in the

Baillieu Library. This disappointingly modest representation of the work of a mapmaker of the significance of John Arrowsmith can be attributed to the policy in force in the first two decades of the Map Collection (established in 1964), which explicitly stated that only current materials were to be acquired, therefore excluding the collecting of historical maps, which was to be the province of the State Library of Victoria.³ For the university's teaching and research on Australian history this was an unfortunate decision, as John Arrowsmith is without peer in his treatment of the 19th-century discovery and exploration of this continent.

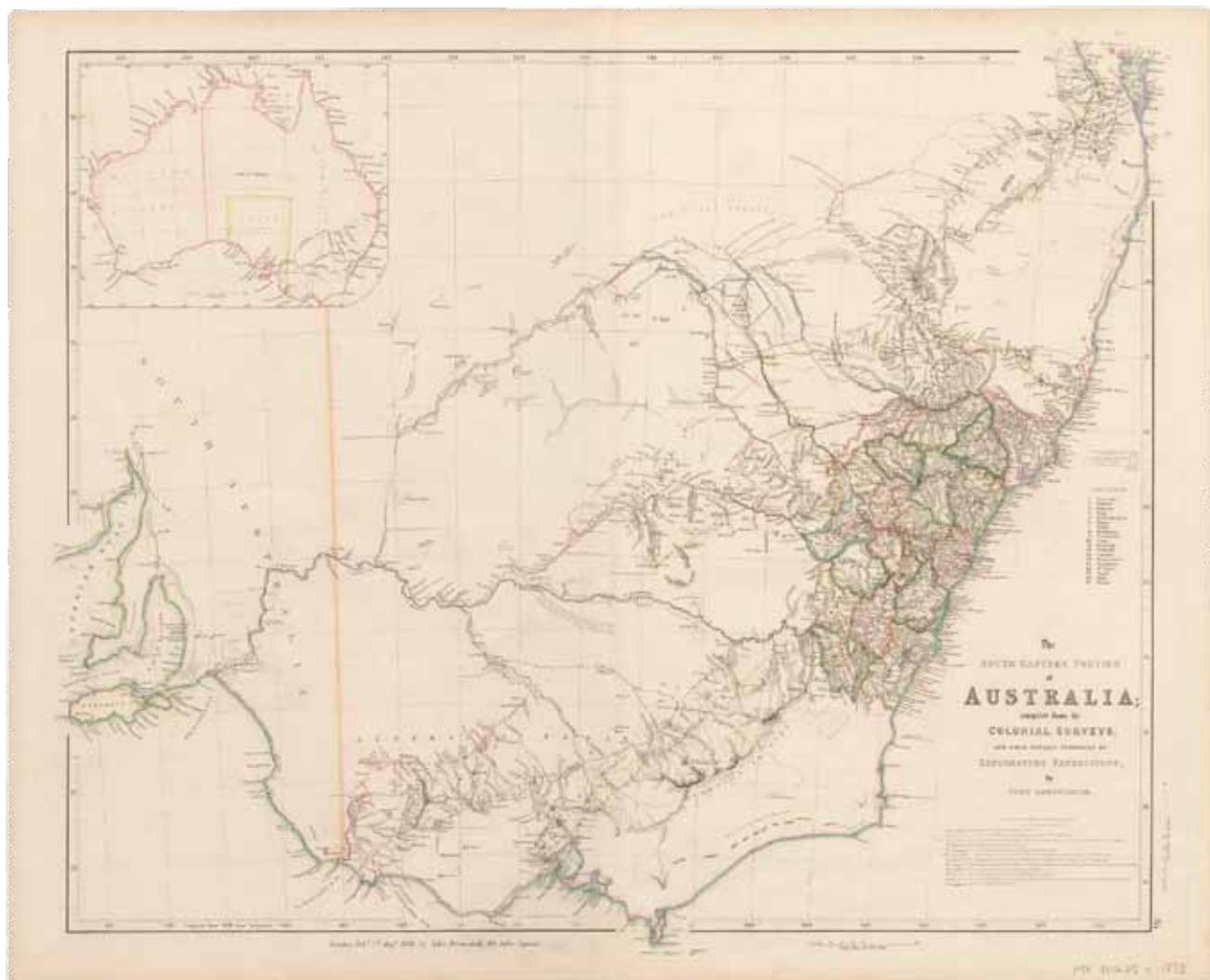
Holdings in the Map Collection, ERC Library

The following five John Arrowsmith maps are held in the Map Collection of the University of Melbourne Library, located in the Eastern Resource Centre. All exist as individual sheets:

- John Arrowsmith, *The south eastern portion of Australia: Compiled from the colonial surveys and from details furnished by exploratory expeditions*, London: J. Arrowsmith, 2 August 1838 (state 1838/3), hand-coloured engraved map, 51.5 × 62.0 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 804.65 a 1838 (illustrated page 40).



John Arrowsmith, *The south eastern portion of Australia: Compiled from the colonial surveys and from details furnished by exploratory expeditions*, London: J. Arrowsmith, 2 August 1838
(state 1838/3), hand-coloured engraved map,
51.5 x 62.0 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 804.65
a 1838, Map Collection, Eastern Resource
Centre, University of Melbourne Library.



Bookplate of Michael Andrews, in Nathaniel Ogle, *The colony of Western Australia: A manual for emigrants ... with the most correct map extant*, London: James Fraser, 1839. UniM Bail SpC/ GRIM 919.41042 OGLE, bequest of Sir Russell and Lady Grimwade, 1973, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.



- John Arrowsmith, *Eastern portion of Australia*, London: John Arrowsmith, 1 May 1841 (state 1841/2), hand-coloured engraved map, 63.0 × 48.0 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 804 a 1841.
- John Arrowsmith, *Eastern portion of Australia*, London: John Arrowsmith, 1 May 1846 (state 1846/1), hand-coloured engraved map, 61.6 × 52.5 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 804 a 1846.
- John Arrowsmith, *Australia from surveys made by order of the British government combined with those of D'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet &c. &c.*, London: John Arrowsmith, 1 May 1841 (state 1841/1), hand-coloured engraved map, 69.0 × 55.0 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 804 a 1841.
- John Arrowsmith, *South Australia shewing the division into counties of the settled portions of the province with situation of mines of copper & lead: From the survey of Captn. Frome, Rl. Engrs., Survr. Genl. of the Colony, 1844*, London: John Arrowsmith, for Dutton's *South Australia, and its mines*, 20 March 1846 (state 1846/1), hand-coloured engraved map, 60.9 × 48.8 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 830 fb 1844 (illustrated page 43).

The provenance of these maps has been lost in the transition from card catalogue records to the online catalogue. It is believed they were donated to the Map Collection during the first 30 years of its existence (c. 1964–94).

Holdings in Special Collections

Other Australian Arrowsmith titles occur in books and journals held in Special Collections of the Baillieu Library. There is an 1847 edition of Arrowsmith's *London atlas* itself, which contains maps dated between 1842 and 1846 (the majority with the imprint 1842).⁴ The first state (1832/1) of the map *Van Diemen's Land* is found in copies of the book by James Bischoff: *Sketch of the history of Van Diemen's Land, illustrated by a map of the island, and an account of the Van Diemen's Land Company* (London: John Richardson, 1832).⁵ Loose copies of this map are hard to come by and it is usually found in Bischoff's book as plate 36. The Special Collections copy of the book bears the signature of George McArthur of Maldon, Victoria, dated 1895.

The second state of the map *The colony of Western Australia* (1839/2) occurs in Nathaniel Ogle's book *The colony of Western Australia: A manual for emigrants ... with the*

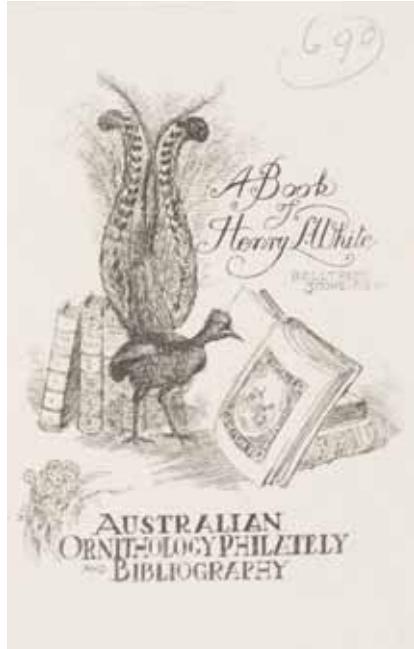
most correct map extant (London: James Fraser, 1839). The Baillieu Library holds three copies of this book, one of which bears the bookplates of two previous owners: Michael Andrews, a businessman in Northern Ireland (illustrated above),⁶ and Russell Grimwade, a Melbourne industrial chemist, businessman and philanthropist, whose generous benefactions to the University of Melbourne include his collection of rare books relating to the European discovery, exploration and settlement of Australia.

The first state of Arrowsmith's map and chart of the west coast of Australia (1841/1) is found in Sir George Grey's publication: *Journals of two expeditions of discovery in north-west and western Australia: During the years 1837, 38, and 39 ...* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1841). The Baillieu Library holds four copies of this book, one of which is also from George McArthur's bequest of 1903.

The parliamentary papers of Great Britain are a very fruitful source of early Australian mapping by John Arrowsmith.⁷ In the past many such volumes, whether at the University of Melbourne or elsewhere, have been subject to the depredations of unscrupulous users who have removed the maps.

Below: Bookplate of Henry L. White of Belltrees, Scone, in Returns to two addresses of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 26 June and 3 August 1838, for: 1, copies of, or extracts from, a statistical report of the colony of Western Australia, which accompanied Sir James Stirling's despatch of the 15 October 1837 ... (parliamentary paper no. 687), London: House of Commons, 1838. UniM Bail SpC/AX f 994.1 E58, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

*Opposite: John Arrowsmith, *South Australia shewing the division into counties of the settled portions of the province with situation of mines of copper & lead: From the survey of Captn. Frome, R.L. Engrs., Survr. Genl. of the Colony, 1844*, London: John Arrowsmith, for Dutton's *South Australia, and its mines*, 20 March 1846 (state 1846/1), hand-coloured engraved map, 60.9 × 48.8 cm. UniM ERC MAPS MX 830 fb 1844, Maps Collection, Eastern Resource Centre, University of Melbourne Library.*



The provenance of the university's holdings has been difficult to determine as they came from several sources: one volume is stamped 'The Premier's Office' while others have only University of Melbourne Library stamps. Many possibly came from the Victorian Parliamentary Library under an agreement made with the State Library of Victoria, which was given the right of first selection of these volumes. If the State Library did not require them the university had second choice.

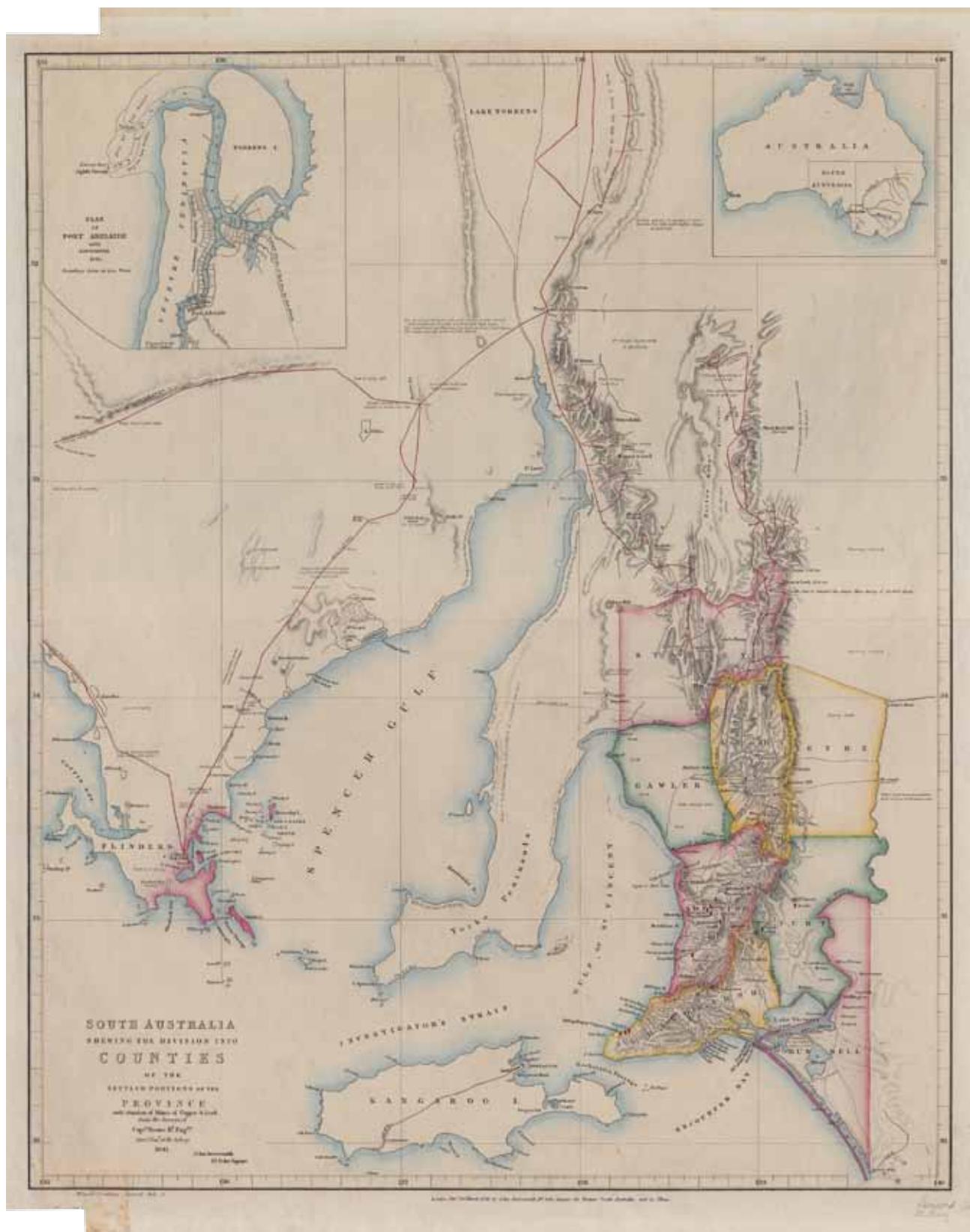
The last two states of *Discoveries in Western Australia* and five states of *The District of Adelaide* can be found in the parliamentary papers. The earlier of the two *Discoveries in Western Australia* maps (state 1833/6; the final one appeared as 1838/1) is the only copy discovered to date, but as it occurs in a House of Commons sessional paper there must be other copies elsewhere.⁸ The volume containing this map has the bookplate of Henry L. White (illustrated left) and the sticker of bookseller and publisher A.H. Spencer of 86 Bourke Street (the Hill of Content bookshop).⁹

The last of Arrowsmith's maps of Australia to be included in his atlas was *South Australia shewing the division into counties of the settled portions of the province ... 1842*. The first state of this map was a normal Arrowsmith publication but the third state (illustrated right) occurs in Dutton's book *South Australia, and its mines*. Following the discovery of copper and lead in South Australia, Francis Dutton used a map that had been published three years previously by John Arrowsmith. It was updated for Dutton to show the locations of newly discovered mineral deposits, mainly in the hinterland and to the south of Adelaide. In this later state the title has been amended, two inset

maps have been added in the top-right and top-left of the map. The first is an inset of Australia showing the position of South Australia and the second is a plan of Port Adelaide. The latter shows proposed building allotments and a proposed road south.

Research in a digital age

In the early 1990s digital images were non-existent to scholars and research on Arrowsmith was excruciatingly slow, as copies of maps had to be located in libraries and then photocopied if the libraries permitted, or if not, a series of pertinent questions had to be put to a librarian in order to determine which state of a map title the library actually held. I was very fortunate that Maura O'Connor, map curator of the National Library of Australia, which holds an extensive collection of John Arrowsmith maps, recognised the value of this research to the National Library and made paper copies available to me. The other stalwart was Francis Herbert of the Royal Geographical Society Map Collection in London, who also sent me paper copies of the society's examples of the relevant titles. Comparative cartography is hard on the eyes, and working on black-and-white copies of coloured maps even more so. But the delayed start proved to be a godsend in the long run,



because a few years after I restarted my Arrowsmith work, digital maps started appearing on library websites.

When digitisation became a reality for libraries, a big rethink had to be made about how to present the Arrowsmith research. This would be the answer to the high cost of publishing in print. It would also allow every map to be shown, not just a selection of examples. CD-ROM format was considered, either as a stand-alone format, or as a disk in the pocket of a printed book. But the first of these ideas was rejected outright as primarily un-browseable without accurate subject cataloguing, while the second option would involve bringing in a third party: a publisher. The online format available through a website was a far more attractive proposition, and it also allowed links to other information and the flexibility of adding more details and examples as time advanced and new information emerged. Choosing this online format did mean reorganising the presentation of the information, the important decision being the decision to make each state of a map a complete encapsulation of all information that precedes any particular state being described. This means the entire history of a title is up to date from the earliest state up to the one actually being described.

Dorothy Prescott OAM is a map historian, whose principal study has been the maps of Australia. She holds qualifications in geography and librarianship and was the first map curator in the University of Melbourne Library, whose map collection she established between 1964 and 1979. Later she was map curator at the National Library of Australia, then she established a consulting service to libraries and other bodies holding map collections. From 1996 to 2010 she and her husband Victor Prescott were consultants to governments on maps and boundaries.

Items from the Maps Collection in the ERC Library (www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/maps/map-historical.html) and from Special Collections of the Baillieu Library (www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/special/) may be viewed upon request. The John Arrowsmith Australian Maps Project can be seen at www.asmp.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/index.html.

- 1 For more information see Dorothy Prescott, 'Australian plates in John Arrowsmith's *London atlas of universal geography*', paper delivered at the International Cartographic Conference in A Coruna, Spain, July 2005, available at <http://tinyurl.com/a96qjpc>.
- 2 British National Committee for Geography, Cartography Sub-committee, *Glossary of technical terms in cartography*, London: The Royal Society, 1966.
- 3 Discussion (2012) between Jock Murphy, Director of Collections, University of Melbourne Library; Susan Millard, Curator of Special Collections, Baillieu Library; David Jones, Map Curator, University of Melbourne Library; and Dorothy Prescott, former map curator, University of Melbourne Library.
- 4 John Arrowsmith, *The London atlas of universal geography: Exhibiting the physical & political divisions of the various countries of the world...*, London: J. Arrowsmith [1847]. UniM Bail SpC/BX f 912 A779, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.
- 5 James Bischoff: *Sketch of the history of Van Diemen's Land, illustrated by a map of the island, and an account of the Van Diemen's Land Company*, London: John Richardson, 1832. UniM Bail SpC/AX 994.6 Bi, George McArthur Bequest, 1903, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.
- 6 Michael Andrews owned a damask factory in Belfast, which he relocated in 1815 from Little York Street to the Ardoyne. In addition to the new factory he built a large house for himself and 30 houses for employees. More mills were built around the growing village, which is now a working-class, mainly Roman Catholic, district. ('Ardoyne', *Wikipedia*, accessed February 2013.)
- 7 Advice from Susan Millard, Curator of Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, 2012.
- 8 *Returns to two addresses of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 26 June and 3 August 1838, for: 1, copies of, or extracts from, a statistical report of the colony of Western Australia, which accompanied Sir James Stirling's despatch of the 15 October 1837* ... (parliamentary paper no. 687), London: House of Commons, 1838 UniM Bail SpC/AX f 994.1 E58, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.
- 9 Henry L. White (1860–1927) was a wealthy pastoralist based in Scone, New South Wales, who also collected stamps, books, birds and birds' eggs. He donated most of his collections to public institutions including the Mitchell Library in Sydney and the National Museum of Victoria (now Museum Victoria). He was an uncle of the writer Patrick White. (Nancy Gray, 'White, Henry Luke (1860–1927)', *Australian dictionary of biography*, vol. 12, Melbourne University Press, 1990.)