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Collection: Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum.

Oil on canvas 51 x 76 cm.

FREDERICK McCUBBIN (1855-1917) AUSTRALIAN

WINTER EVENING, HAWTHORN, 1886



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Frederick McCubbin was born and educated in Melbourne and his first art training was taken as a youth at the Artizans' School of Design in Carlton. His studies were further advanced when he learned art and drawing under the tuition of G.F. Follingsby at the National Gallery School, where he was appointed drawing instructor in 1884.

During the 1880's he married and lived in several houses in the Melbourne area (Auburn, Blackburn and Brighton), travelling frequently to Box Hill to paint in the company of Tom Roberts and others.

When he left for England in 1906 he had prospered by means of the proceeds of successful exhibitions and his commissioned work.

Upon his return he resided at South Yarra where many of his portraits were painted. He had the honour of being President of the Victorian Artists' Society on three occasions and was as well a member of the Australian Art Association.

Sun 23/6

Dear Mrs. Behr,
As I take up my 'Mont Blanc' to write this I am sitting, as usual, in the 'office' sharing the desk with Dot. We have just returned from the wilds of Bendigo, where we stayed overnight. We had a good day yesterday, leaving home about 10.30, stopping for a light lunch at Woodend, and continuing in the general direction of Bendigo along the Calder Highway. We had plenty of time, so diverted off the highway to the interesting old gold mining town of Castlemaine. The town had its hey-days in the 1850's and 1860's, and is still quite a thriving place. We called first at the market - an attractive 13 year old building - once the centre of social life, and now a museum, mostly with relics of its gold mining past. Being poor senior citizens we, of course, got in half price (The lady selling tickets didn't even ask to see her cards, which wasn't very flattering of her. I thought that we looked much too young to qualify). The building is in an open square in the centre of town, surrounded by a parking area. We did not know until we got there that a vintage car club had decided to use that time and place for its meeting. The cars were a bit of a mixture of interesting machinery and unis-placed enthusiasm - restored A40's, Ford Anglias etc. There were a number of early Austrians - models, National Chev's, a Studelcher, Dodge Bros, etc. The pick was a Pierce Arrow sedan c. 1927, and a beautifully restored Bristol. From the market-museum we looked in at the local art gallery, which has a good collection of early Australian paintings and some later ones. This card does not do justice to one of them continues

We did not have a qualified guide to show it around, but it is a fairly small gallery and we managed. All of the works are Austrian and most of the painters of note are represented (except mum). From there we went on to Buda - the home of the Leviny family for over 120 years. The first Leviny came out from the Buda part of Budapest (hence the house name). He worked as a goldsmith, silversmith, watchmaker etc and the house and grounds are quite substantial. He was also a good mate of Baron von Mueller (who laid out Melbourne's botanic gardens) and his influence was very evident in the winding paths, screen plantings, and a succession of garden areas to give a feeling of spaciousness and anticipation. The old tennis pavilion remains, but the court was made into a formal garden in 1918. ~~As~~ Because of the long continuity of occupancy by one family, the house itself, the furniture, and the garden are much the same as they were last century. We pushed on to Bardigo, arriving at our motel about 3.30. Pat and Wilf came down for the party, on their way to a holiday in ~~the~~ Adelaide. We had arranged to stay at the same motel, in adjoining rooms. They had arrived earlier in the day, so we had afternoon tea with them, saw the latest photo's of your cousin Janet's first born son (now 8 months.) Her unbiassed ~~and~~ view is that he is the best looking and most talented kid around. We had arranged to stay at that particular motel, because it was just a short walk from where your cousin Rosemary lives. She was the one who had arranged the surprise party for her mother's 70th birthday. The girls in my brother's family didn't do too well in choosing husbands. By contrast, the boys, David & Geoff seem happily married and have lovely wives. We were at all the weddings - in fact I acted as M.C. at them all. Even at the time I wouldn't have given Mayson and Rosemary much chance of happiness with the fellows they



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conquered. In Rosemary's case the fellows had had an
unfortunate early life and had been in trouble. He had been married
before & divorced, but I think Rosemary thought that she could help
him. He left her to live with someone else, and now has a third
family. He had a daughter by his first wife and did not show
any interest in that child whilst he was with Rosemary. Fortunately
he shows no interest in their daughter Rebecca. Rosemary seems
a lot more mature now. She has built a new house, and is
a good mother. Rebecca is a lovely little girl with tons of personality.

The rest of the family were there when we arrived at about
5PM. David Vicky and their two kids (Michelle & Brady) Geoffrey and
Heather with their two ^{NATHAN and BRIANNA} boys, Joyce's sisters Lorraine & Jean and brother
Doug, plus an old school friend. John & Joyce arrived a little
while later. John knows about the "surprise" party, but Joyce had
been kept in the dark. I think that it was the nearest Joyce
had ever been to being speechless. It was a good night, and
it was good to catch up on members of the extended family we
don't often see.

David is doing quite well now, with his ag-
science background and knowledge of the pig industry. He
was approached to join a new company at its formation, Austvac,
which produces vaccines & products for pig breeders. The company
has really prospered and now has 80%+ of the market. It won
both the State and Federal Small Business awards for its achievements.
It is very good to me because he was always a hard worker, even
as a kid. Geoffrey is more the creative type. As I was not
around this morning to take Australia All Over, I have
included a tape of cousin Geoff, made a year or two ago, and
included a tape of cousin Geoff, piano, keyboard, didgeridoo, music
of the sounds on the tape, piano, keyboard, didgeridoo, music
saw, & extra voices etc are by Geoffrey, in a series of dubbings.
I think that the lad has talent which needs to be properly
marketed. Both

David & I have made a few suggestions which might help. With the exception of the old faithfuls - (Sail Away, Johnny Boy, & Wauling Matilda), the ~~songs~~ words and music were written as well as produced by Geoff. I almost forgot, the words ~~for~~ for the Penguin song were written by your Auntie Joyce. I would think that 'The Blowflies Barbecue' would go over well on Australia All Over, & have suggested that it be sent in, and made available through ABC shops. Maybe there is a market in America & providing they could understand the accent.

We said goodbye to Out & Wilf at the motel this morning, and, as the weather was not as good today, we came straight through without any further sight-seeing. It is raining at the moment, but when it clears I will get out and attack the roses again.

Sorry that you missed our Probus meeting last Thursday Night. I think that a good time was had by all. We seem to be relaxing a bit more and enjoying it as we get to know each other better. Jack & Peggy will be inducted at the July meeting. We are leaving our outing with the club on Thursday to our Angora (~~goat~~) farm near Seymour. Mum & I are both going, with about 40 others. We will help to separate the sheep from the members.

By all accounts the Merc. should have arrived in Melbourne and be available for inspection this week. Hope that I can find time to go and have a look. There seem to be a few things lining up for next week, which is, of course, the last of the financial year (in Australia). One of the fellows from Probus rang me at the office on Friday and wants to change from his present broker. He mentioned some of his holdings over the phone. At a quick calculation he is not exactly a candidate for the poor-house. He lives in Boston Road, near where Alan Watkin used to live,

These 'blond' glass pens seem to write very freely, but I think that this is about enough for you to read. Just a couple of other things I forgot to mention. Yes, we did get our 1991 phone books early in the week, so we can start ringing people up again. We also noticed that the Baskin-Robbins Bakery had a collection of pottery by "Bugs" (Hughes), a friend of "Uncle Jack's". We blew a few pieces ourselves, as have those who received christening mugs from the same source.

Love,

Gene and Lynn xx