

# Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 23<sup>A</sup>

December 1993

Enameller profile —  
Sandra Kerr



I began working with enamel in 1967 and at that stage was totally self taught. Before that I had been involved with painting and printmaking, -enamel was supposed to support my painting but it took over.

I still find new ways to explore enamel possibilities and see it essentially as a painters medium that can produce rich vibrant colour and a unique play of light between metal and glass, - effects which are not possible with oils and water-colour. Enjoyment of enamel's technology and 'limitations' has resulted in my experimenting and developing new ideas for texturing and colouring. I work on both small and larger pieces and find that both balance each other in their creative possibilities. I don't have a recognisable style as I experiment too much, and technique depends on 'mood' or external factors such as working to a price.

Intricacy and fine detail lend themselves to jewellery and miniatures, and larger pieces allow a more painterly and expressive approach. I tend to treat the metal surface, often with texture to enhance the light refraction, as a 'canvas' for an enamel painting regardless of whether it is a piece of jewellery or a plate. I work through a range of techniques from plique-a-jour, cloisonne, and champleve to basse-taille on silver to stencils, dusting, sgraffito and pen and brushwork in bright colours on copper panels and plates to suggest landscape and sea elements.

I enjoy all the different aspects of enamel but especially love those techniques where I can use a brush or pen, and work on a larger scale than jewellery allows. These days to my surprise, I have become quite fascinated with the possibilities of Riso Screens to produce fine details.

I am influenced by a number of eclectic sources, past and present cultures, Arthurian and earlier Celtic mythologies, literature, landscape and especially the sea which has been the strongest recurring theme in my work since the early seventies and which again became the major element in my recent exhibition.



Bowl with underglaze brushwork

Miniature with Riso Screen line detail.

# News

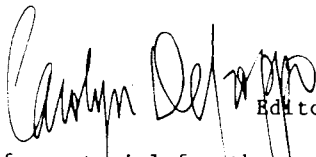
End of year time again!

It's a busy time for many enamellers with many exhibitions and craft shows, and regular galleries wanting extra Christmas stock. Good luck to everyone for healthy sales.

I hope to catch up with many of you at the opening of the 3rd National Exhibition of Enamels in January (details inside).

Thompson Enamels in the US has sent AEN 20 sample packs of their new millifiore wafers. To distribute these I'm going to pick 20 envelopes at random from the stack. You may have been lucky, then again you may not.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season.

  
Editor

The deadline for material for the next issue No 25 is January 23rd 1994. Submissions are very welcome, and AEN is always pleased to know any enamel news and doings.

Material can be faxed to 066 841 772 or mailed to PO Box 418, Mullumbimby NSW 2482.

## Subscriptions

Australian Enamel Newsletter  
PO Box 418 Mullumbimby NSW 2482

Subscriptions - 6 issues per year

Regular - \$16.00

Student - \$8.00

New Zealand Airmail - \$18.00

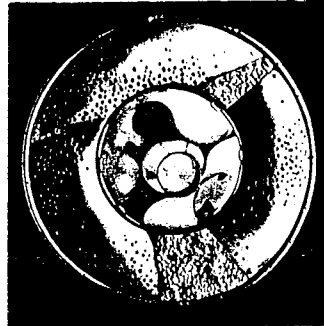
Overseas Economy Airmail - \$18.00

## Thank you

Thank you to the following people for their contributions to this issue ;

Sandra Kerr, Mary Raymond, Thompson Enamels, John Gowty, Margaret Siddall, Glenice Matthews, Helen Fitzhardinge, Jorgen de Voss, Barbara Ryman, Enamellers Association

Congratulations to Barbara Ryman who has had a brooch acquired for the permanent collection of the Museu Municipal de L'esmail Contemporani in Salou, Spain. The brooch was one of two exhibited at the CIDAE International Exhibition in Barcelona in September 1993.



Mary Raymond has recently completed a commission for two wall sculptures for the new office premises of Smiths Snack Foods in Chatswood.

The sculptures are each set in wall alcoves and are made up of three horizontal sections - three 30cm square panel. Colours used match the woven fabric that the company has used for its internal furnishings - teal green, brick red and a burned orange. The sculptures were completed and installed in mid November.

AEN has heard of three Australian enamellers whose slides have passed the first level of jurying to be included in the 12th Biennale Internationale de Limoges, France in July and August 1994. They are: Wendy Hall, Barbara Ryman and Carolyn Delzoppo. Any others?

## Around the Magazines

### Craft Arts International No 29

Contains article by Mary Raymond on 2nd National Exhibition of Enamels held at Craftspace, Sydney in January 1993. Two pages, colour photographs.

Glass on Metal October 1993. Volume 12, No 5. Magazine of the US Enamelist Society. This issue contains; Article on the work of Mexican enameller Doris Kiefer, article on the work of Deborah and William Watkins, reports from the Enamellists Convention, a how-to on Applying Dry Enamels with Screen Printing, and an article and cover featuring the exquisite painted enamel jewellery of Larissa Rosenstock. See Issue 23 for subscription details.

### Ornament Autumn 1993, Volume 17 No1

Contains the second part of Master Classes in Stringing and Knotting Beads. A detailed 6-page step-by-step of how to do fancy knotting when assembling complex bead necklaces. Also contains colour article on the enamelled jewellery of Heinz Brummer.

# Exhibitions

## Art of Fire - Third National Exhibition of Enamels

Jurors Ken Lockwood, Robyn Tudor and Louise Mitchell have viewed the submitted slides, and the following artists have had their work accepted into the exhibition;

Stacey Allen	Jillian Parnell
Mil Baskerville	Elaine Palmer
Ksenja Benko	Joseph Pinter
Heather Calnan	Mary Raymond
Carolyn Delzoppo	Barbara Ryman
Jenny Gore	Marion Smith
Wendy Hall	Kamilla Szakos
Roger Hopkins	Tibor Szakos
Sandra Kerr	Margaret Warwick-Clarke
Catherine Large	

The exhibition will be opened 6-8pm, Wednesday 5th January by His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, AC, Governor of New South Wales. The wife of the Governor of NSW, Mrs Sinclair is a patron of the Society of Arts and Crafts in NSW.

There is no organised dinner function after the opening this year, but impromptu dinner groups will be able to gather at any of the many restaurants in the Rocks Area. This is a rare opportunity for enamellers and friends from all over to meet and enjoy each others company. Plan to be there.

Enamellers are reminded that the delivery date for accepted works is December 8.

Art of Fire, 5th - 16th January, 10am - 6.30pm daily  
Craftspace, 88 George Street, The Rocks, Sydney.

The Annual Christmas Exhibition of work by the Enamellers Association is on again at Prouds Gallery, Cnr Pitt and King Streets, Sydney from 7th December until 24 December. The exhibition will include jewellery, panels, sculpture and tableware.

Graduating students from the Qld College of Art, Gold and Silver Department exhibited their work at the Craft Council Gallery in Brisbane in November. Some exception enamel pieces were exhibited, including two sets of cutlery with enamelled handles by Caroline Bruton and Stefan Bakaj, a caviar box with champeve fish design lid by Amanda Lewis, and a set of vessels with enamel details by Kathryn Wardill.

The college will continue a strong enamel programme in 1994.

An exhibition of jewellery by Val Aked will be held at the Golden Canvas Gallery, 17 Rowntree St, Balmain from December 1-18.

# Supplies

## A & E Metal Merchants

A new supplier of metals for jewellers, hobbyists and craftspeople, owned and operated by people with an extensive knowledge of metals. Sterling silver, copper, brass and nickel available.

Open 10-6 Monday to Friday. Mail order available.

Metal Merchants

5th Floor, 104 Bathurst st, Sydney

Telephone 02 264 5211

Enamel Emporium in the US stock copper vase and container forms from Japan, in addition to Japanese enamels. Nine styles of vases and lidded boxes are available. Top and bottom edges are lipped making them easier to enamel, and silver plated bezels are available to finish off the pieces. Prices in US dollars V-4 \$45.32, V-11 \$45.00.

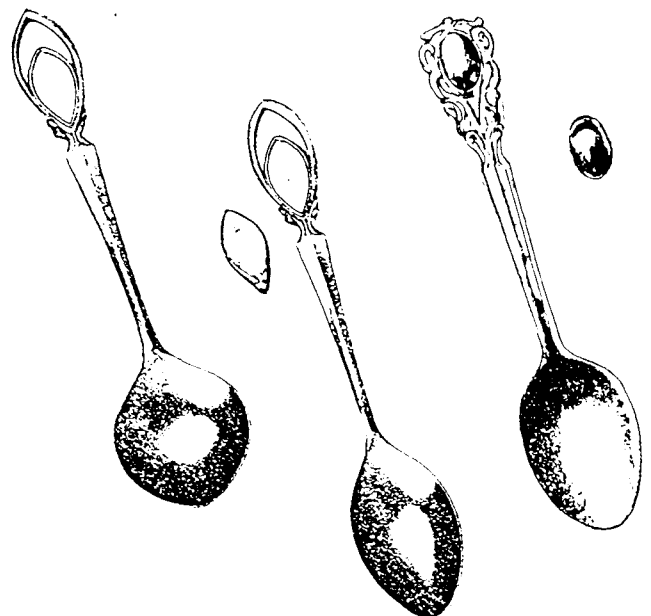
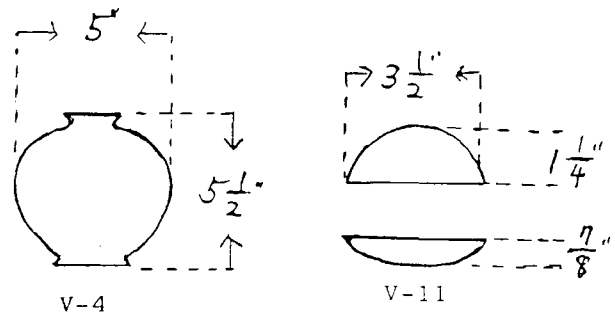
Enamel Emporium also stock a range of copper shapes, dishes and square and rectangular trays. Also stainless steel spoons ready to take enamelled copper shapes in handle. Most spoons are around US\$2-3.00 each, including copper insert.

Catalogue available US\$5.00 from

Enamel Emporium,

14441 Memorial Drive #7,

Houston, Tx 77079, US.



# PREPARATION OF METAL

## Copper

Always select the best quality pure copper for enamelling. Copper that contains any brass or silver alloy is not suitable. After four or five firings, blisters will begin to form in the enamel and even though repaired and refired, more will continue to form. Roofing copper or etching copper are both unsuitable.

To obtain brilliant effects with transparent enamels, the copper should be especially well cleaned and prepared.

First it should be annealed by heating in the kiln until the copper has a pinkish glow. This procedure has a dual purpose. It burns away any grease or oil residue from the milling or spinning, and it also brings a layer of firescale to the surface. This, when removed by acid, carries with it any impurities that may have been on the surface of the metal. Clean the firescale off with nitric acid in proportions of 8 parts water to one part nitric. Take care when handling acid and never add water to concentrate acid. It is very dangerous. Remember: AAA - always add acid. When the copper is etched clean by the acid, the surface can then be treated in various ways to brighten the metal - especially important if transparent enamels are to be used. The surface can be rubbed with steel wool, a glass brush, an abrasive nylon dish scourer or even wet sand to achieve a bright finish. A final wipe over with saliva will neutralise any residue of the cleaning process as will bi-carbonate of soda.

After cleaning metal must be handled only by the edges to prevent grease being transferred from the fingers. If handling is difficult, use a tissue between the fingers and the metal.

To test if the metal is clean, run water over the surface. If the water draws into globules or puddles, then the metal is still greasy. If the water sits in a smooth sheet over the whole surface, then the metal is clean and ready for enamelling.

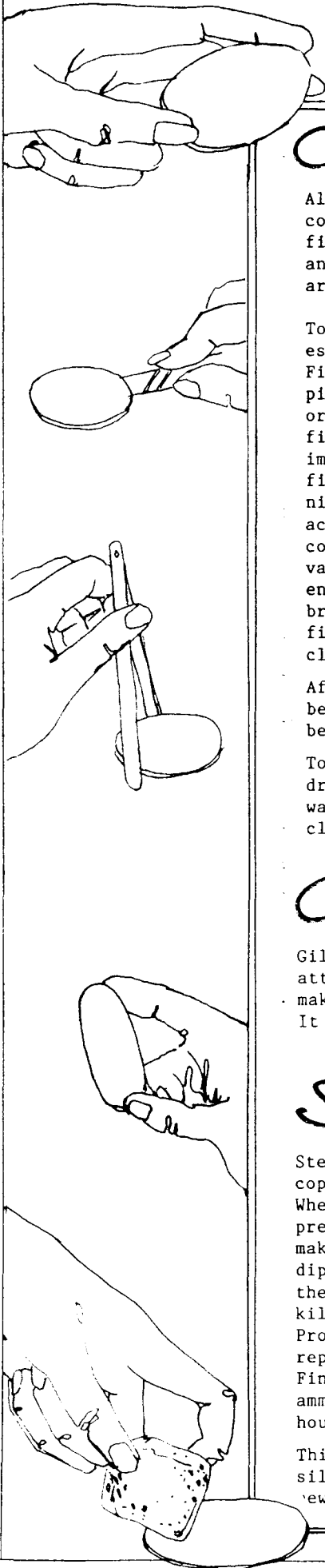
## Gilding metal

Gilding metal, also called tombac, is an alloy of copper and zinc and has an attractive yellow gold colour. It is used mostly by commercial badge makers. It enamels very well but should only be fired a couple of times. It is prepared in the same way as copper.

## Sterling silver

Sterling silver is an alloy containing 925 parts pure silver and 75 parts copper. The copper makes it harder and more durable than pure silver. Where hardness or strength is required, or when the work is cast, it is preferable to use sterling silver, but it must be prepared carefully to make it suitable for enamel. The treatment process is called bright dipping, and is a way of bringing a layer of fine silver to the surface of the sterling. The metal is heated to annealing temperature, either in the kiln or with a torch, and then quenched in acid. Sulphuric acid or Procraft pickle can be used. This process of heating and pickling is repeated five or six times to bring a create a heavy layer of pure silver. Finally, the surface is brushed with a brass brush in warm water with ammonia. It should also be soaked in bi-carbonate of soda for at least an hour to ensure any acid residue is neutralised.

This process removes the copper from the surface without affecting the silver. If the metal surface is filed or disturbed during enamelling, then new firescale will form on the fresh metal leaving a grey stain.



# S FOR ENAMELLING

## Pure silver

This metal is most effective for jewellery when using transparent or opalescent enamels, as it will not oxidise and will show the colours to the best advantage.

Fine silver is soft and so jewellery needs to be carefully designed so that the enamel is not vulnerable to damage.

Very little needs to be done to prepare pure silver for enamelling. Grease residue from milling and handling can be removed by heating the metal in the kiln or with a torch. The surface can be treated to obtain different finishes that will show through the transparent enamel. It can be satin finished with a glass brush or steel wool. It can be textured with chasing or engraving tools, or it can be buffed to a high finish if a bright transparency is required. After buffing with tripoli and rouge, residue polishing compound can be removed with a tissue and the piece then cleaned with a soft brush in warm water with a little cloudy ammonia and detergent. To test if the metal is clean, run water over the surface. If the water separates into puddles then the piece is still greasy, but if the water lies smoothly across the surface without breaking up, then the surface is ready for enamelling. Stubborn grease can be removed by running the flame of a gas torch over the surface very briefly. The grease burns off as a white shadow that flits across the surface. If done very quickly, the bright polished surface will not be dulled. Test again with water. Saliva (which is alkaline) when smeared across the surface will often neutralise any residue. After the metal is clean, take care to handle only by the edges to prevent finger marks and more grease. Use tissues between fingers and metal if the edges are difficult to handle.

## Gold

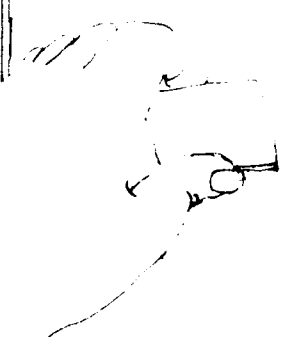
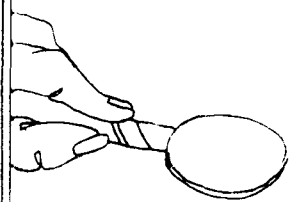
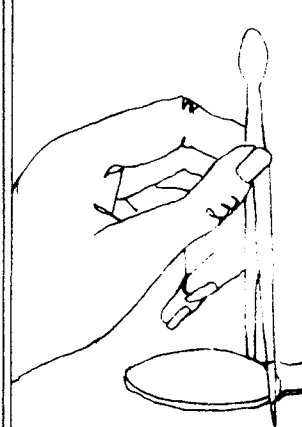
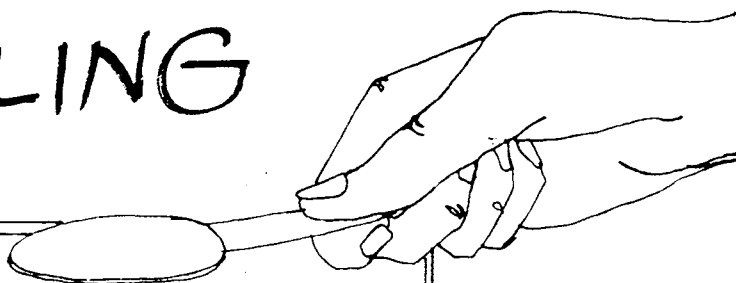
The higher the carat of gold used, the better the results will be when enamelled. 24 carat, being pure gold would of course be preferable, but is not a possibility for most jeweller/enamellers - its very expensive, and its also very soft and unsuitable for jewellery that will need to withstand wear. Pure gold is prepared for enamelling in the same way as pure silver.

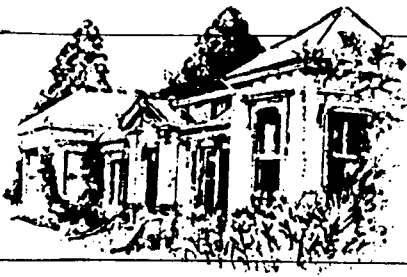
The next alloy suitable for enamelling is 18 carat gold. Like sterling silver this metal needs to be prepared to remove the surface copper and any impurities. Again, as with sterling silver, the process called bright dipping is used. The acid used is sulphuric acid mixed to a proportion of ten parts water to one part acid. With 18 carat the process needs to be repeated at least five or six times.

After bright dipping, soak the metal in a bath of bi-carbonate of soda and water to neutralise any acid that may have penetrated the metal during the heating and pickling. This is important if working with castings.

9 carat gold is generally not suitable for enamelling, though in some cases it is possible. The same process of bright dipping and neutralising is necessary as with 18 carat gold and sterling silver. The metal will still oxidise during enamelling however. By and large, opaque enamels are more likely to be successful than transparents, though all can have problems. Enamel may not adhere or may draw into globs, or pits and bubbles can occur especially with castings. Avoid enamelling 9 carat gold if possible, sometimes it will work but a lot of time can be spent finding out that sometimes it wont.

Issue 25 will feature a double page technical article on 'Use of Acids - types, applications and safety'.





# BUDA

Where life  
was an Art

Hungarian silversmith, Ernest Leviny arrived in Castlemaine, Victoria in 1853 at the height of the Australian goldrush.

We can only assume that it was a sense of adventure that led Leviny to give up what was apparently a successful jewellery business in London to try his luck on the goldfields.

Ill equipped for the mining conditions that he encountered, he was quick to establish himself in business in Castlemaine's Market Square as a jeweller and silversmith. Through wise investment he soon prospered.

By 1864 at age 45 Leviny had retired from business and purchased the property now known as Buda in preparation for his marriage to Berth Hudson from Ross in Tasmania. His investments in property and mining shares were to maintain Ernest and Bertha and as it turned out, five unmarried daughters from their family of ten children for a further 117 years.

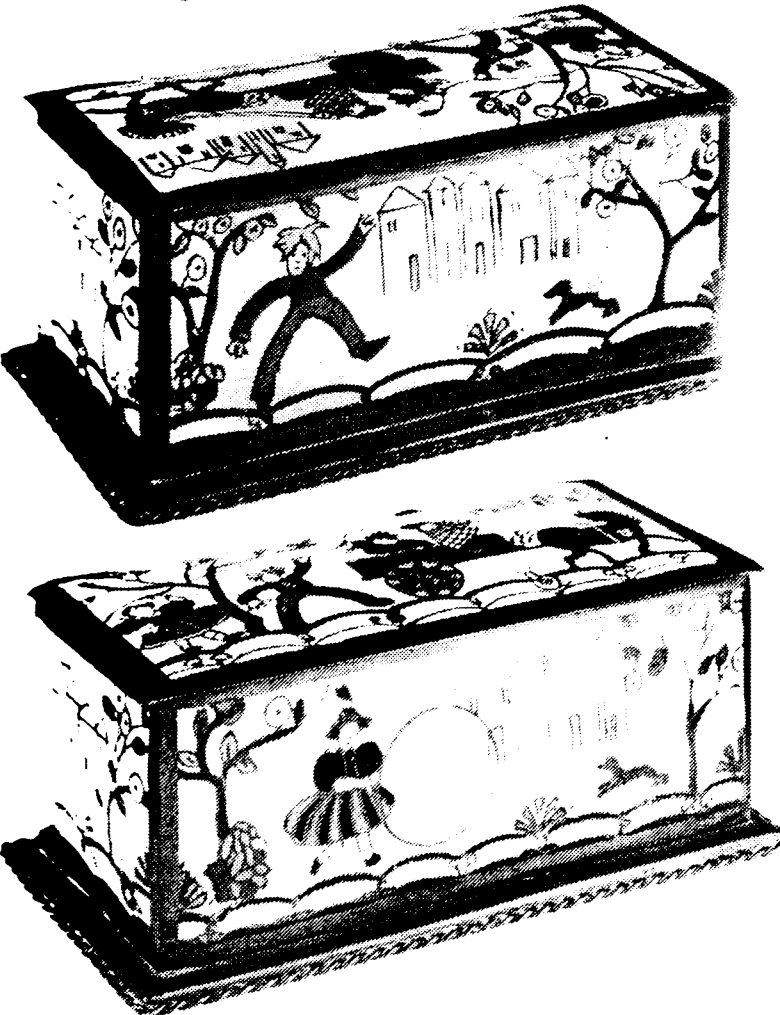
The family was devoted to the arts, but it was Dorothy, the second youngest, born in 1881 who was eventually to pursue her father's interest in metals. Her sisters Mary, Kate, Gertrude and Hilda all worked in a variety of mediums including painting, photography, woodwork and needlecraft, and all were dedicated gardeners.

The five acre garden at Buda, designed and developed by their father stands testament to the endeavour and horticultural pursuit shared by the whole family.

Dorothy was the most prolific of the sisters and there is a large collection of her art and craft works at Buda. For a period during the 1890's Dorothy studied drawing and painting at the Bendigo School of Mines under the then Head of the Art Department, A. T. Woodward.

Like her sisters Kate and Hilda, she had a number of entries in the First Australian Exhibition of Womens Work held at the Royal Exhibition Buildings, Melbourne in 1907. Dorothy's entries were listed in four sections, painting, design, inventions and art needlework. One entry in the design section was a hand painted poster publicizing the event. Dorothy was the only one of the sisters to win awards at this exhibition.

It's not certain when Dorothy took up metalwork and enamelling however she did attend classes in Bendigo and Melbourne and for a period of forty years attended classes at the Castlemaine Technical College run by Stanley J Ellis himself a craftsman of considerable talent. Ellis probably had the greatest influence on Dorothy's work. The Castlemaine Art Gallery has on permanent display, a selection of enamels by Stanley Ellis.



Boxes with champleve panels

Leviny daughters with their mother. Dorothy is second from the right.



# Workshops

by John Gowty, Curator, Buda.

Dorothy specialised in plique-a-jour and champleve styles of enamelling and would often incorporate recycled objects into her work. For example, a plique-a-jour panel was inserted into the base of an old miners pan to create an attractive and colourful light shade.

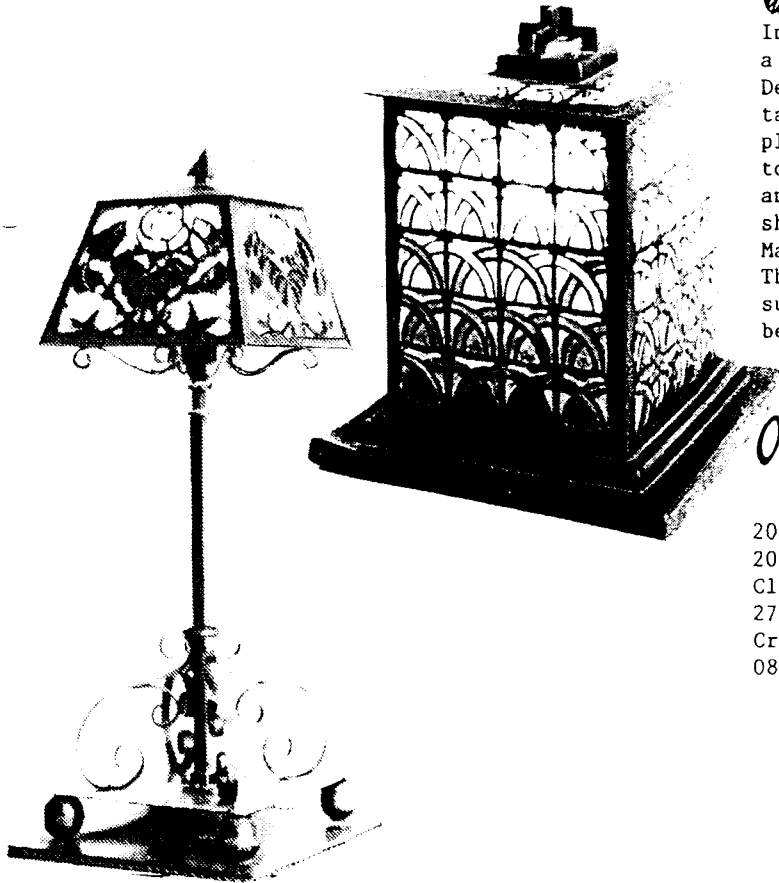
Of her larger metal works, a copper tea and coffee service was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1978. It's one of her more impressive pieces and is noted as 'demonstrating a strong influence of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, especially the work of Charles R Ashbee'.

The British Arts and Crafts Movement and its philosophies had a significant impact on its arrival in Australia and particularly through publications such as 'Studio', artists like Dorothy Leviny were kept in touch with contemporary trends and attitudes.

Dorothy's metals and enamels decorate both the house and garden at Buda, as do the art and craft collections of all members of this talented family.

Buda Historic Home and Garden is open to the public every day from 9.30 - 5.30.

Buda is at 42 Hunter Street, Castlemaine, Victoria.



Plique-a-jour lamp:

## Enamelling - Cloisonne Jewellery

Internationally recognised goldsmith and enameller Glenice Matthews will conduct a 5-day workshop in cloisonne enamelling as part of the Albany Arts Council Summer School programme from January 10 - 14 1994. Cost \$140.00

For further information contact the Summer School co-ordinator, telephone 098 41 6011 or fax 098 41 7401.



25th McGregor Summer School in Toowoomba Qld will conduct a wide range of visual and creative workshops between 3-14 January 1994, including Gold and Silver smithing with Wal Van Heecheren and Creative Silver with Val Aked.

Brochures available from the Manager, Cultural Activities DD Unilink  
PO Box 100, Toowoomba 4350  
Ph 076 32 1422 Fax 076 32 5055



Master metal artist Charles Lewton-Brain is intending to visit Australia during 1994 and will be organising several workshops. These workshops are extremely worthwhile as anyone who attended those held in Brisbane several years ago will attest. Details of Charles itinerary are as yet unknown. If interested in attending one of these workshops, contact your local JMGA who should have details as they become available.



In November the Qld College of Art and JMGA Qld held a second workshop in enamelling with tutor Carolyn Delzoppo. The technique of champleve enamelling was taught to 16 students and members of JMGA. JMGA plans another series of workshops in 1994, including toolmaking and rivetting, stone setting, hollowware and chain making. Anyone interested in participating should contact Jorgen de Voss on 07 395 9139, or Maurie Mansell on 07 266 8040.

The viability of this initiative depends on active support from local jewellers and metalsmiths, and besides it's fun.

## Opportunity to exhibit

20th Annual Alice Craft Acquisition

20th May - 12 June 1994

Closing date for submission of entry forms is 27 April. For further details and forms contact Crafts Council of NT, PO Box 85, Alice Springs NT 0871. Telephone 08 524 417.

# Diary

- 7 - 24 December Annual Exhibition of Enamellers Association, Prouds Gallery, Sydney.  
See this issue for details.
- 5 - 16 January Enamel - Art of Fire. 3rd National Exhibition of Enamels, Sydney.  
See this issue for details.
- 25 - 29 January Japan Shippo (Enamel) Conference and Cloisonne Jewellery Competition.  
Tokyo.
- 31 January Deadline for entry forms Stanthorpe Arts Festival. See issue 23 for details.
- 11 February Deadline for application for invitation to 16th Mornington Peninsular  
Craft Event. See Issue 23 for deatails.
- 25 Feb - 8 April Stanthorpe Arts Festival, Qld.
- 27 April Deadline for receipt of entry forms, Annual Alice Craft Acquisition,  
Alice Springs NT. See this Issue for details.
- 20 May - 12 June Annual Alice Craft Acquisition, Alice Springs, NT.

## International Events

Those planning international travel during 1994 may be interested to know of these events.

Society of North American Goldsmiths Annual Conference - 'Transformations - personal artistic evolution' March 20 - April 2 1994. Portland, Oregon, USA. For programme and registration details contact SNAG 94, 3245 SE Alder Court, Portland, Oregon, USA.

Goldsmiths Hall Enamel Exhibition, London.  
25 May - 24 June 1994. The core of the exhibition will be a small group of fine historic enamels that illustrate the finest skill, design and taste of the past. In addition there will be approximately 100 contemporary items illustrating similar qualities. There will also be practical demonstrations during the exhibition.

12th Biennale Internationale de L'Email.  
Limoges, France, July - August 1994. During the summer of 1994 six exhibitions will be held in this renowned centre for enamelling, including the prestigious juried exhibition of contemporary enamels from around the world. For more information contact Marie-Noelle Robert, at Biennale Internationale de L'Email, 7 Boulevard de Fleurus, 87000 Limoges, France.

British Society of Enamellers Exhibition  
Blossom Music Centre, Ohio, USA. July 1994.

Focus on Fire - The Enamel, Clay, Glass and Metal Symposium will be held in Seattle, Washington State, USA from 19 - 23 August 1994. Programme details are not yet available, but workshops will be held before and after the symposium. For more information contact Cheryl Leo-Gwin, PO Box 2608, Redmond, WA 98052, USA.

International Invitational Enamelling Exhibition.  
Kent State University, Ohio, USA. September 1994.  
Details as yet unavailable.

