



◀ Image 1: 'Sandhurst-exterior of Shamrock Hotel and view of Pall Mall on a Saturday night'. Wood engraving, illustrator Oswald Rose Campbell, engraver E. Lee, *Illustrated Australian News (IAN)* 4 Dec 1871. Image from Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria. Accession No. IAN04/12/71/212.

*Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting... With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy; happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption...*

### Wood engraving in the colonial illustrated newspapers in Australia

'Wood engraving was introduced to Victoria in 1852 with the arrival of Samuel **Calvert**, followed by Charles **Winston** and later Friedrich **Grosse**'.<sup>4</sup> The 'modern' engraving technique was used by these engravers.

It was 'the only printing technique available for the mass production of imagery in combination with letter-press'. The engraved wood block could be inserted into the letterpress and the image incorporated into the text at the desired place. The block could then be used for reprints in other newspapers.

The main illustrated newspapers were the *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers* (IAN) (1861–1896) published by the proprietors of *The Age*, the *Illustrated Melbourne Post* (IMP) (1862–1868), the *Illustrated Sydney News* (ISN) (second series 1864–1894) and the *Australian Sketcher for Pen and Pencil* (1873–1889) published by the proprietors of *The Argus*. These papers were modelled on the *Illustrated London News*. By the end of the 1880s photo-mechanical processes superseded wood engravings.

### Edward, the engraver, in Australia

It's not known where Edward learnt his skill as an engraver. He may have been apprenticed to a master engraver or he may have attended an art/trade school in England before migrating to Australia. *The Post Office Directory of London* for the early 1860s lists an 'Edward **Lee**, wood engraver, The Strand London'.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, I do not have any corroborating evidence to confirm this is one and the same.

Often wood engravers were apprenticed to a relative but Edward's heritage was related to working lives on and around the Thames as 'cornmeters' and 'lightermen'. There was a prominent wood engraver in London named James **Lee** at the time but I cannot find any direct familial relationship.

It is also difficult to trace Edward's career in Australia – or any of the artists/engravers' careers – as the engravings were not always signed. Edward's monogram appears on newspaper engravings between 1871 and 1885 and most of his recorded engravings have been found in the *IAN* and many were reprinted in the *ISN*. The fact that his monogram has not been identified outside these dates does not mean he wasn't working as an engraver. If family folklore is to be believed, working for *The Argus* may have meant he was employed by the proprietors of *The Argus* who published the illustrated newspaper, *Australasian Sketcher for Pen and Pencil*. There are no records of the terms and conditions under which the illustrators, photographers or engravers were employed by the newspapers.

The fact that his monogram does exist suggests he may have worked on a freelance basis. His monogram changed over the years depending on whether he was the sole engraver or whether he was working in collaboration with another/others. Examples of his monogram include: **E Lee**, **E.L.**, **L** and **R** (**Lee and Richardson**).

Edward's collaborators included artists/engravers, such as: Oswald Rose **Campbell** (1820–1887), who in 1870 became the first President of the Victorian Academy of Arts, now known as the Victorian Arts Society in Melbourne, Albert Charles **Cooke**, Thomas Selby **Cousins** and James Waltham **Curtis**.

Often business partnerships were formed between the artists. Edward partnered the artist/engraver John Thomas **Richardson** (1835–1898) in 1872. ▶▶