

Notes and Comments

Some further Ellis drawings

It is regretted that, in noting other holdings of work by Ellis, no mention was made of the two watercolours and four pencil drawings held by the La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. These were presented by Walter Astley, resident in Australia, in 1913. They are recorded in the *La Trobe Library Journal*, v. 2, no. 5, April 1970, pp. 4, 6, 7, 9, with two illustrations—a pencil sketch, “A Woman of New Zealand” and a watercolour of the Fluted Cape, Van Diemen’s Land. There are pencil drawings of two Tongan chiefs, with a canoe drawn on the verso. All these are signed and dated 1777. Another unfinished watercolour is also attributed to Ellis.

Heaphy Exhibition

For many New Zealanders Charles Heaphy, V.C., continues to be *the* New Zealand colonial artist. Yet this view is usually based on the relatively small number of his works that have been reproduced, particularly on the early lithographs of Wellington and Nelson. So that this artist’s varied talents could be seen in depth, the Library exhibited from September to November almost the entire collection of Heaphy’s paintings and drawings. The exhibition marked the launching of the 1977 Turnbull Library Prints, by Heaphy. This collection has its roots in the important purchase of New Zealand Company pictorial material in 1916 by Alexander Turnbull, which included fifty Heaphys. Over the years, by gift and purchase, it has been added to steadily and now numbers sixty-seven items, the major Heaphy collection in existence.

An exhibition such as this shows the marked change in Heaphy’s style, particularly after the eighteen-fifties. The immediacy of his response, as a boy of nineteen in a new land, gave the early watercolours a strength and directness. Different paper and a different palette, together with the passing of the years and perhaps changing fashions, produced a more romantic style but one that still maintained the sharpness of accurate seeing. The change accompanied the progression from his painting as part of his employment by the Company to his painting as an accepted artist in Auckland. Although very different in character from the earlier watercolours, the works dating from this later period are also of great beauty. Heaphy’s view of the White Terraces, for example, shows us the