

# GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (February 2003)

By Rob Upson

## ARTHUR THOMAS WOODWARD

In 1894 the Bendigo School of Mines and Industries, (formerly the Mechanics Institute and now the Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE) appointed Arthur Thomas Woodward as head of its Art and Design Department.

Born in England in 1865, Arthur Woodward was an accomplished painter and teacher and proficient in several mediums. He attended Bradford Grammar School and studied at the Birmingham School of Art. He later taught at the Birmingham School in the 1880s and in 1885-86 he exhibited with the Royal Society of Artists in Birmingham.

At the age of 24 he arrived in Australia and commenced teaching at the Sale School of Mines in Gippsland. After a number of years at Sale he moved to Bendigo to take up the aforementioned position.

In addition to painting, Arthur Woodward also had some skill in poetry and in 1899 he published a collection of his poems entitled *Songs from a Studio*. As a teacher he allowed outdoor painting classes and introduced life drawing to the curriculum. He also encouraged his students to travel overseas and, in particular, to study in Paris.

Although today his teaching and artistic abilities are rarely appreciated outside this region, the work of some of his students has had strong recognition both overseas and in Australia. These artists have included Inez Abbott, Thomas Bone, Ola Cohn, Madge Freeman, Agnes Goodsir, Marion Jones, Louise Riggall, and John Walker.

Woodward had significant influence on teaching methods and standards in Victorian Art Schools and in 1899 he was appointed Examiner in Drawing for the Victorian Matriculation Examination. He was involved in the formation of the Bendigo Art Society in 1920 and had a close association with the Bendigo Art Gallery. In 1937 he was one of two artists to be awarded the King's Coronation Medal for his services to the Arts in Australia. He retired in 1921 and died in 1943 aged 77.

From 1<sup>st</sup> February to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2003, the Bendigo Art Gallery are presenting an exhibition entitled *Songs from a Studio: Arthur Woodward and his Circle*. This exhibition will include the work of Arthur Woodward as well as works of some of his most acclaimed students.

More about these students later.

*Reference: Tracy Cooper, Bendigo Art Gallery*

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