

## THE STUDENTS OF ARTHUR WOODWARD

As mentioned in the previous article, some of the students of Arthur Thomas Woodward, art teacher at the Bendigo School of Mines, had gained recognition both overseas and in Australia. A brief biography of these artists is as follows.

### **Agnes Goodsir (1864-1939)**

Born in Portland, Victoria, Agnes Goodsir studied with Woodward for two years from 1898. She was a painter of landscapes, portraits and still life and encouraged by Woodward to travel, she left for Paris where she ultimately and permanently resided. She studied at various academies<sup>1</sup>, including the Académie Delecluse and exhibited frequently in London and Paris. Agnes Goodsir was elected a full member of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in 1926. She held only two solo exhibitions in Australia, both in 1927.

### **Louie Riggall (1868-1918)**

Louise 'Louie' Blanche Riggall was a Gippsland based artist who attended the Sale School of Mines from about 1893/84. It was here that she met Arthur Woodward prior to his appointment to Bendigo. In the mid 1890s Riggall moved to Bendigo to resume studies with Woodward. She was a talented watercolour artist and on completing her studies went to Paris and the Académie Delecluse, alongside other Australian artists. During WW1 she signed up for nursing duties and died in 1918 while on active service.

### **Helen Atkinson (1874-1949)**

Helen Louise Atkinson was the daughter of prominent Bendigo surgeon, Dr H.L. Atkinson.<sup>2</sup> She was an artist and illustrator who studied with Woodward in the early 1900s. After the death of her father she became joint owner of the Ravenswood Estate.

### **John Walker (1878-1955)**

John 'Jack' Walker trained as a sculptor with Woodward at the Bendigo School of Mines for eight years. He went to England in 1906 to study at the Royal College of Art and also in Paris. He received numerous public sculpture commissions and some of these can be seen around Bendigo. The *Boer War Memorial (1904)* in Pall Mall, statue of *Captain Cook (1905)* at St. Paul's Cathedral, a bust of *Sir John Quick (1934)* in Rosalind Park and a marble bust of the poet *Robert Burns (1910)* at the Art Gallery.

### **Ola Cohn (1892-1964)**

Born in Bendigo, Ola was the granddaughter of Moritz Cohn one of the Cohn brothers who set up the Victoria Brewery in Bridge Street. She went to Girton College and then joined Woodward's art classes from 1910 to 1919. Ola then studied at Swinburne Technical College for five years before going to London to study sculpture at the Royal College of Art. She worked in stone, wood, terracotta and bronze and one of the lecturers who influenced her work was the well-known sculptor, Henry Moore. One of her best-known works, locally, is *The Fairies Tree* in the Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne. On her death, her studio in East Melbourne and her collection of works were bequeathed to the College of Adult Education for the use by the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors.

### **Marion Jones (1892-1977)**

Born in Bendigo, Marion Jones studied drawing with Woodward prior to 1913. She then studied at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School winning an NVG scholarship in 1917. She travelled to London and exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Paris Salon and the London Portrait Society. Her portrait commissions in London included Billy Hughes (the picture was later presented to Parliament House) and Viscount Novar of Raith (Governor General of Australia, 1914-1920). During WW2 she worked for the Red Cross in Bendigo and also at the Ordnance factory. A number of her works left in storage in London were destroyed during the Blitz.

**Madge Freeman (1895-1977)**

Born in Bendigo, Frances Margo Freeman trained with Woodward from 1911 to 1915. She excelled in watercolours and oils and studied at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School for four years. In 1926 she married an engineer and lived on the African Gold Coast until his premature death in 1929. After travelling and painting in Europe she returned to Australia in 1935 and lived in Bendigo until her second marriage in 1940. A collection of works was bequeathed to the Bendigo Art Gallery after her death in 1977. A retrospective exhibition was held at the gallery in 1981.

**Inez Abbott (1896- 1957)**

Not a lot is known about this artist, apparently spending most of her working life in France. Born in Bendigo, she studied with Woodward after 1917. In 1922 she went to study at the Académie Delecluse and produced numerous watercolours of European scenes. She briefly returned to Bendigo in the late 1920s but by 1932 was living in London.

**Thomas Bone (1901-1953)**

Born in Bendigo, he studied under Woodward from 1917 to 1921 with a Victorian Govt. Scholarship. He held several art teaching positions in Victoria before moving to Adelaide in the mid 1930s to become senior lecturer at the South Australian School of Art. Bone specialised in watercolour landscapes and won a gold medal at the S.A. Centennial Exhibition in 1936 and the Geelong watercolour prize in 1946.

**Norman Penrose (1903-1976)**

Born at Milloo, approx. 50 kms north of Bendigo, Norman William Penrose attended the Bendigo School of Mines during 1919 to 1921. His watercolours often depicted the mining landscape of the Bendigo region. He taught at several Victorian technical schools including Ballarat as Art Master.

**Dorothy Dempsey (1913- )**

Born in Eaglehawk, she studied with Woodward as a private student for four years from the late 1930s. She painted subjects from the Bendigo region including several gold mines.

*References- Encyclopaedia of Australian Art by Alan and Susan McCulloch  
Tracy Cooper, Senior Curator, Bendigo Art Gallery*

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'academy' comes from the name of the villa outside Athens where Plato taught philosophy. It became applied to gatherings of learned men in search of wisdom. Artists called their meeting places 'academies' but it was only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that academies took over the role of teaching art.

<sup>2</sup> You may recall, from the Grapevine Cutting of Oct.1999, that Dr. H.L. Atkinson bought Knipe's Castle in 1866. This residence was built in 1861 on what is now Valentine St. and was demolished in 1925.

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