



Panoramic view of Port Jackson:

The entrance of Port Jackson and part of the town of Sydney, New South Wales 1823  
39.3 × 57.2 cm (image)  
45.5 × 59.5 cm (sheet)  
UniM Art (1973.0383)

The Town of Sydney in New South Wales 1823  
39.2 × 57.0 cm (image)  
50.3 × 66.6 cm (sheet, irreg.)  
UniM Art (1973.0382)

Part of the harbour of Port Jackson and the country between Sydney and the Blue Mountains New South Wales 1823  
39.1 × 57.4 cm (image)  
40.5 × 58.4 cm (sheet, irreg.)  
UniM Art (1973.0381)

James Taylor (draughtsman)  
Robert Havell & Son (engraver)  
colour etching and aquatint and hand-colouring on 3 sheets



‘Melbourne in Forty Minutes!!!’ The pitch to Londoners to see John Skinner Prout’s *Panorama of the voyage to Australia and visit to the Australian gold fields* (1852) goes to the heart of the ‘virtual reality’ promised by the hugely popular panoramas of the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Invented and patented by Robert Barker in 1787, panoramas were staged in purpose-built rotundas in London’s Leicester Square and the Strand, where visitors could immerse themselves in 360-degree vistas painted on huge canvases.<sup>2</sup>

Viewed from a central platform and cleverly lit to heighten the sensation of being ‘on the spot’, they became a surrogate for actual travel. Patrons of Prout’s ‘moving’ panorama could experience the voyage to Australia as the canvas rolled from one drum to another. Informative, educational and entertaining, this radically new way of experiencing the visual world was the precursor to the cinematic newsreel: it was ‘the first true visual “mass medium”’.<sup>3</sup>

Panoramas of the Australian colonies were particularly popular in London, a phenomenon richly reflected in the Grimwade Collection in views of Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and King George Sound. These are found in illustrated visitors’ handbooks to the panoramas, in drawings and aquatints, in later photographs, and in fold-out book illustrations, such as those for James Atkinson’s *An Account of the State of Agriculture & Grazing in New South Wales* (1826) (see pp. 109–11) and the earlier publication, D.D. Mann’s, *The Present*

*Picture of New South Wales* (1811).<sup>4</sup> In that, the image of Sydney Cove, engraved in London from watercolours by the convict artist John Eyre, extends over two paired fold-out sheets. Together the two views, one looking west from Bennelong’s Point, and the second to the east from The Rocks, give readily comprehensible visual form to the settlement and the complex topography of the harbour. Similarly, views published by Absalom West in Sydney in 1812–14 often span two plates to encompass the vistas (see pp. 90–91).

When *A view of the town of Sydney*, 1830, painted by Robert Burford from watercolours by Augustus Earle, was shown at Burford’s Leicester Square Panorama in 1830, concerns were raised that the prospect of a ‘rude passage to an earthly paradise’ could give rise to an increase in transportable offences.<sup>5</sup> The grim realities of convict life were brought into sharper focus in a second collaboration between the two artists, this time of Hobart Town. Here two chain gangs, one consigned to hard labour, are depicted in the foreground. They, along with the groups of Aboriginal figures which frame the image, do not appear in Earle’s atmospheric preparatory watercolours for the panorama.<sup>6</sup> It is only in the annotated fold-out etchings in the visitors’ handbook that their presence in the large panorama, exhibited at the Strand in 1831, is recorded (next spread). The etchings are accompanied by a comprehensive key in which distinguishing landforms, including Mt Wellington and Kangaroo Point, significant public (and private) buildings, military fixtures, economic enterprises—whaling, lumber, sheep—and ships at anchor in the Derwent River are identified.<sup>7</sup>

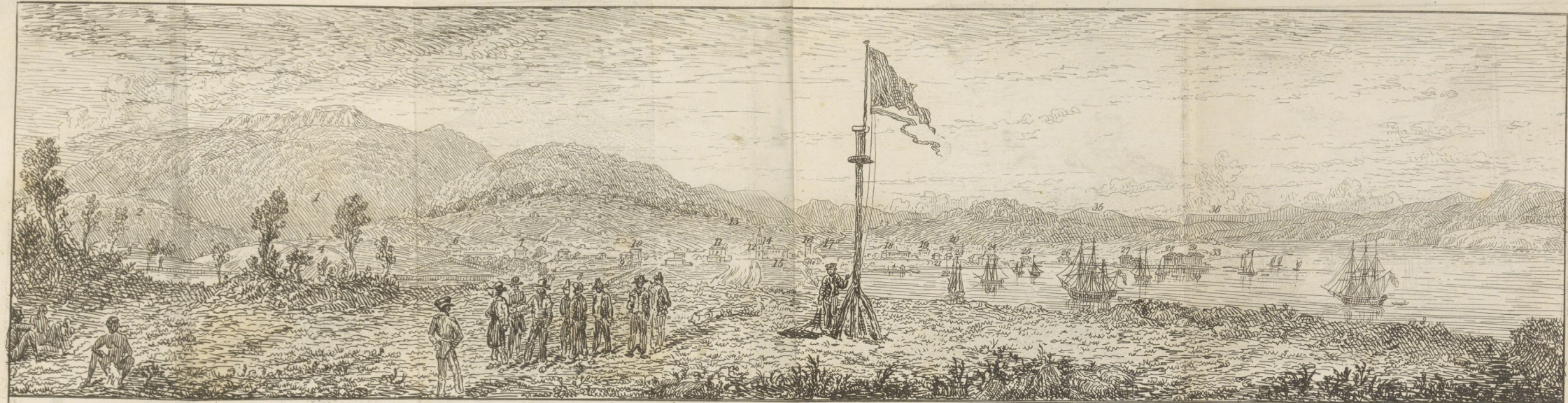


EXPLANATION of a VIEW of HOBART TOWN, EXHIBITING at the PANORAMA, STRAND.

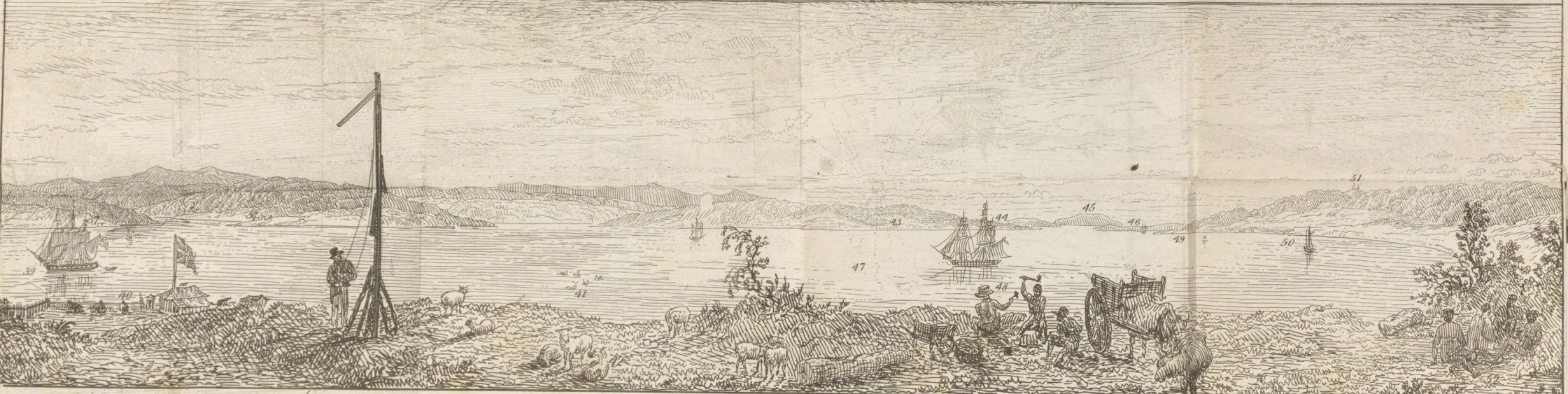
DESCRIPTION  
OF A  
VIEW  
OF  
HOBART TOWN,  
VAN DIEMAN'S LAND,  
AND  
THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY,  
NOW  
EXHIBITING  
AT THE  
PANORAMA, STRAND.

PAINTED BY THE PROPRIETOR,  
MR. R. BURFORD.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY NICHOLS AND SONS,  
EARL'S COURT, CRANBURN STREET.  
1831.  
PRICE SIXPENCE.



- |                               |                                 |                          |                               |                            |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Mount Wellington            | 7 Judges residence              | 13 Lime Kilns            | 19 Mr. Solomans residence     | 25 Colonial Treasury       | 31 The Brig Cyprus              |
| 2 Cascade Hill                | 8 Burying Ground                | 14 St. Davids Church     | 20 Prisoners Barracks         | 26 Capt. Bells Store       | 32 The Mermaid Female Transport |
| 3 Capt. Reids                 | 9 Colonial Secretarys residence | 15 Court House           | 21 Colonial Secretarys Office | 27 Scotch Australian Store | 33 New Lumber Yard              |
| 4 Military Barracks           | 10 Hotel                        | 16 Mr. Midwoods Seminary | 22 Bank                       | 28 Commercial Hotel        | 34 Macquarrie Point             |
| 5 Convicts                    | 11 Jail                         | 17 New Town Road         | 23 General Hospital           | 29 Mr. W.A. Bethunes Store | 35 Mount Direction              |
| 6 Commissary Moodys Residence | 12 Surveyor Generals Office     | 18 Governors House       | 24 Commissariat Store         | 30 Pier                    | 36 Devils Back                  |



- |                         |                     |                   |                       |                    |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 37 Kangaroo Point & Bay | 40 Mulgrave Battery | 43 Clarence Point | 46 South Arm          | 49 Cray Fish Point | 51 Mount Nelson     |
| 38 Ferry House          | 41 Whale Fishing    | 44 Ralphs Bay     | 47 River Derwent      | 50 Sandy Bay       | 52 Group of Natives |
| 39 H.M.S. Rainbow       | 42 Sheep            | 45 Betsys Island  | 48 Chain Gang at work |                    |                     |

Description of a View of Hobart  
Town, Van Diemen's Land,  
and the Surrounding Country  
by Robert Burford  
printed by Nichols and Sons,  
London, 1831  
UniM SpC





The implicit premise of the panorama was that it recorded ‘reality’—but whose reality?<sup>8</sup> The *Panoramic view of Port Jackson*, 1823, a three-part aquatint etched by Robert Havell & Son in London from watercolours painted by Major James Taylor of the 48th Regiment, encompassed a 270-degree span of Sydney and its harbour. A fourth watercolour completed the 360-degree panorama, on which it is possible that a full-size panoramic view, reportedly shown at Barker’s Panorama in 1824, was based.<sup>9</sup> The aquatint, which was offered for sale in both London and Sydney, speaks of progress. It maps the advances instigated by the visionary Governor Macquarie through his ambitious building and town planning agendas, and his regulation of civil and moral codes of behaviour. The brutality, exploitation, chaos and confusion of the rum-fuelled early days of the penal colony, and the ongoing realities of dispossession and marginalisation are here overwritten with a narrative of benign rule and social cohesion designed to allay the concerns of prospective emigrants.

The theme of civil order is established in the left-hand plate with the contained, domesticated space of the surgeon’s garden—even a kangaroo has been tamed—dominating the foreground. The second plate documents, with meticulous precision, the new urban-scape, an environment in which institutions such as the Military Hospital and, behind it, St Phillip’s Church feature prominently, and an environment conducive to the harmonious coexistence of diverse groups—military men, hospital patients, women, Indigenous Australians, convict labourers and the three Polynesian, probably Māori, men.<sup>10</sup> The reality of the violent dispossession of the people of the Eora Nation has no place in this celebration of the advance of Empire; rather, a stark comparison is drawn between its forward march, heralded by the felling of trees in the third plate, and the ‘wilderness’ inhabited by the Aboriginal group.

Whereas colonial progress is signified by built structures in the Taylor panorama, it is expressed in the visual control exerted over the landscape in Robert Dale’s lyrical, light-filled and delicately coloured *Panoramic view of King George’s Sound, part of the colony of Swan River*, 1834. Lieutenant Robert Dale of the 63rd Regiment, a military topographer, soldier, explorer and artist, was stationed at the Sound, near Albany in Western Australia,

between 1829 and 1833. In this all-encompassing image, a 2.5-metre-long aquatint produced in London by Robert Havell Jnr, Dale seizes command of a 360-degree sweep of the landscape, and from the elevated vantage point of Mt Clarence, lays it out for ready consumption. Topographic features have been gently coerced into alignment with the shifts in perspective demanded by the visual span, the whole tied together by the foreground frieze on which a narrative of apparently welcome occupation plays out.

Dale was clearly captivated by the unfamiliar plants he encountered in this biodiverse region, portraying them—including the distinctive *Kingia australis*, an ancient species endemic to south-west Australia, and the coastal dwarf form of the bull banksia (*Banksia grandis*)—with ‘sufficient diagnostic features to be readily identifiable’.<sup>11</sup> His association with the Noongar people, particularly Nakinna, his guide and interpreter on exploratory expeditions and here probably the figure depicted wearing European clothes, informed Dale’s portrayal of amicable intercultural exchanges and traditional practices, including hunting and fishing methods, fire-making, body adornment, dwelling types and the managed burns signified by plumes of smoke.

Given these apparently positive experiences, Dale’s shocking decision to take the decapitated and preserved head of the murdered Noongar leader Yagan to London, where it was displayed alongside the panorama, seems incomprehensible.<sup>12</sup> That the King George Sound area was not Yagan’s Country was no impediment to this or his publication of a gruesome illustration of Yagan’s severed head, by the caricaturist George Cruikshank, in the accompanying booklet. Yagan’s murder at Swan River in 1833 occurred during a period of rising tensions over resources and a rapid escalation of retaliatory violence. While Dale undoubtedly intended to reassure prospective emigrants that British authority had and would always prevail, his characterisation of Yagan as an ‘untameable savage’—an assessment with which British surgeon and phrenologist T.J. Pettigrew conveniently concurred—may also have been designed to justify the actions of the colonial administration at Swan River.<sup>13</sup>

**Panoramic view of King George’s Sound, part of the colony of Swan River 1834**

Robert Dale (draughtsman)  
Robert Havell Jnr (engraver)  
hand-coloured aquatint and engraving on three sheets  
17.9 × 273.7 cm (image)  
20.3 × 276.6 cm (sheets)  
UniM Art (1973.0225)

RUTH PULLIN

FOLLOWING PAGES

**An Account of the State of Agriculture & Grazing in New South Wales**  
by James Atkinson  
J. Cross, London, 1826  
UniM SpC