Chapter 15

That Accounts for the Coke in the Milkanut:¹
William Bradshaw’s stock book entry and three differing provenance versions

It is not known what became of the Beck piano after John Blackman’s auction of Wednesday, 6 June 1838. Hypotheses pertaining to the history of the instrument after 1838 can be created using information derived from four sources

1. William Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the 1780/86? Beck square piano (Plates 328e and 328f)
2. three differing provenance versions, each of which is based on hearsay.

None of the four sources conclusively proves that the Beck piano came to Botany Bay with the First Fleet.

William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: The entry dated 29 October 1973

Bradshaw kept meticulous records of his acquisitions. Data for each acquisition were recorded in a large purpose-printed ledger, and comprised handwritten information (in ink) entered into columns spaced over two adjacent pages. Each column was headed (respectively, left to right)

• left-hand page
  1. day of purchase or receipt, and hour of day
  2. description of old wares purchased or received
  3. date (a handwritten heading)
  4. cost (in pounds).

• right-hand page
  5. name and surname of person by or through whom purchased or received

Data concerning Bradshaw’s purchase of the 1780/86? Beck piano are found in one of his stock books (Plates 133 and 133a). Bradshaw’s stock book entry for his purchase of the Beck square piano reads

1. left-hand page (slashes within the quotation delineate each column): ‘Oct 29 11.30 / Square Piano by Beck for self / 1786 / 150’ (the last column’s pound-sign heading has been overwritten with a dollar sign: ‘$’)

2. right-hand page: ‘W. F. Bradshaw / Adam Barber / 82 Murriverie Road North Bondi’.

At the top left-hand corner of the left-hand page, Bradshaw has written (in blue ink) ‘1973’. Paul Kenny, the eminent antiques importer, Bradshaw’s close friend and colleague and the current custodian of Bradshaw’s stock books, posits that the address ‘82 Murriverie Road’ written in black ink at the top centre of the left-hand page was written by Bradshaw.

The Beck piano entry is the last of three entries dated 29 October 1973. The first two entries detail the acquisition of: 1) a 1760 Chippendale tea table; and 2) two gilt chairs dating from 1850.

Bradshaw’s stock book entry indicates that he purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano on Monday, 29 October 1973 from Adam Barber at 82 Murriverie Road, North Bondi, Sydney (Plate 133a). It is not known how or when Barber acquired the piano.

Oddly, there is no mention of an Adam Barber in any of the Australian Electoral Rolls for 1968, 1972 or 1977 (compulsory enrolment for federal elections existed from 1912). One assumes that: 1) Adam Barber was Australian;

---

2 I am indebted to Brian Barrow for providing me with a photographic copy of the first half—that is, the left-hand page—of Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the Beck square piano. I am also indebted to Paul Kenny for supplying me with a photographic copy of the adjacent page—that is, the right-hand page—upon which is written the continuation of Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the Beck piano.

3 ‘Paul Kenny’s friendship with Bill Bradshaw goes back to the 1950s when Bradshaw was his mentor in Market Street and Kenny had a share in an antique business in Orange.’ Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’. See also ‘Tea, Cake, Convivial Company and a Proposed Provenance’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

4 In the 1970s Bradshaw and Kenny ‘worked together on the furnishing of the restored Elizabeth Bay House’. Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.

5 Telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny, Wednesday, 7 August 2013.

and 2) Adam Barber did not substitute either his middle name or another name for his Christian name (the Australian Electoral Rolls for 1968 and 1977 list no person with a middle name of Adam and a surname of Barber).7

Plate 133 The left-hand page of William Bradshaw’s handwritten entry in one of his stock books regarding acquisition of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano (detail).


Plate 133a The right-hand page of William Bradshaw’s handwritten stock book entry regarding acquisition of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano (detail).


7 See Electoral Rolls for 1968 and 1977 in ibid.
At first sight, Bradshaw’s stock book entries dated 29 and 31 October 1973 appear to have been written at the same time. Did Bradshaw manufacture Adam Barber’s name? It does seem unlikely. In order to possess a trading licence, the law required antiques dealers—if they were not exclusively antiques importers—to keep detailed accounts of purchases and sales. Government officers would regularly appear unannounced at Bradshaw’s shop in order to inspect his records; on many an occasion these inspectors were anything but pleasant. The licensing sergeants would often visit the addresses listed in Bradshaw’s stock books in order to substantiate the veracity of his data. Since Bradshaw was mortally afraid of authority, it is reasonable to assume that the details provided in his business records are true.8

Did Adam Barber mislead Bradshaw by giving a false name, and if so, why? Barber would not have needed to falsify his name unless he had acquired the Beck piano illicitly, or was not entitled to sell the instrument to Bradshaw. A fictitious name would have allowed Barber to reinvent the Beck’s history.

A fabricated name would also have allowed Bradshaw (if he was aware that Barber’s name was false) to invent a provenance. Such a scenario, however, would represent a departure from Bradshaw’s character. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013, Kenny, Bradshaw’s friend and colleague and a man blessed with an acute memory, remarked that Bradshaw, in relation to provenance details, might ‘embellish a story, but he wouldn’t invent; he was a truthful man’.

When Bradshaw acquired the piano from Barber, the owner of 82 Murrriverie Road was Charlotte Barnes, who had purchased the property one year earlier, on Wednesday, 18 October 1972. When Barnes acquired the Murrriverie Road property, she was living at 3/315 Military Road, Vaucluse, Sydney (in 1980, the Electoral Roll gives the same address for Charlotte, who is described as a ‘designer’).9 Charlotte may have regarded 82 Murrriverie Road as an investment property; she owned it for only 15 months, subsequently selling it on Friday, 18 January 1974 to Gianni Finelli and his wife, Patricia.10

Since Bradshaw’s stock book entry indicates that he purchased the Beck piano from Adam Barber at 82 Murrriverie Road, it is reasonable to assume that Barber was renting the property to live in. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Wednesday, 7 August 2013, Kenny proposed that the reason Adam Barber sold the instrument to

---

8 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information.
10 I am indebted to Phillip Barrow for this information.
Bradshaw (along with a 1760 Chippendale tea table and two 1850 gilt chairs)\textsuperscript{11} may have been because he was moving out of 82 Murriverie Road; given that 82 Murriverie Road was sold only two and a half months after Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano from Barber, Kenny’s speculation is logical.

Bradshaw’s stock book entry dated 31 October 1973—that is, two days after he had purchased the Beck piano—indicates that he returned to 82 Murriverie Road, where he purchased the following antiques from Adam Barber (Plates 328e and 328f):

1. a 1790 satinwood fire-screen desk  
2. a Viennese square piano dated 1800  
3. an 1850 gilt couch  
4. a 1790 mahogany table  
5. a 1760 gilt armchair.

Ten days later, on Saturday, 10 November 1973, Bradshaw once again returned to 82 Murriverie Road; his stock book entry indicates that he made further purchases from Bobby Lee\textsuperscript{12} and Adam Barber (Plate 328e). These purchases comprised:

1. a 1790 Chippendale serving table  
2. a William and Mary chest from ca 1685  
3. a 1760 George II side table.

That within 13 days Bradshaw purchased 12 antiques from Adam Barber reinforces Kenny’s speculation that Barber intended to move out of 82 Murriverie Road.

Bradshaw’s three visits to Barber may be explained by the fact that, ‘knowing Bill’,\textsuperscript{13}  

1. the first set of acquisitions (on 29 October) went immediately into Bradshaw’s shop window, and sold within a day or two  
2. with money in hand, Bradshaw returned to 82 Murriverie Road (on 31 October) in order to purchase more stock, which sold quickly

\textsuperscript{11} See Plate 133.  
\textsuperscript{13} I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for the following hypothesis, which emerged within the context of a telephone conversation with the author, Wednesday, 14 August 2013.
3. once again, with money in hand, Bradshaw returned (on 10 November) in order to acquire more antiques from Adam Barber.

Within the context of this series of events, Bradshaw (conjecturally) sold a good deal of stock. These transactions may have enabled him to cover the outlay for the Beck piano—an instrument that he did not intend to sell, but had acquired for himself.

Apart from the details in Bradshaw’s stock book relating to the 1780/86? Beck square piano, three differing provenance versions for the instrument exist. The proponent of each provenance version holds a deep personal conviction that the version is true. The three provenance versions are given below.

**Provenance Version 1: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm ‘30 miles out of Sydney’**

Hearsay—derived from the doyen of the Sydney antiques scene, William Bradshaw, and subsequently recounted to the author by Stewart Symonds—tells us that at John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838, the 1780/86? Beck piano was sold to the owners of a farm located ‘30 miles [48 kilometres] out of Sydney’. According to Bradshaw/Symonds, this information came from John Blackman’s auction records.14

If Worgan’s piano was sold on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney, the notion that such a distance from Sydney could be anywhere is not viable. In 1838, there was not much ‘30 miles out of Sydney’, with the exception of a town that may have been connected with the nineteenth and twentieth-century life of Worgan’s piano. This town is Windsor.

**George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor**

Hearsay derived from Bradshaw/Symonds proposes that in 1973, Bradshaw was either ‘tipped off’15 or saw an advertisement concerning a ‘spinet’ for sale. In England and Australia during the twentieth century, some antiques dealers understood the term ‘spinet’ as being synonymous with small keyboard instruments. Moreover, the term spinet was ‘often mistakenly used

14 Advertisements published in the Sydney Morning Herald reveal that the administratrix of John Blackman’s estate was Sarah Blackman. See Sydney Morning Herald, 30 October 1846, Vol. 21, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.
15 According to Stewart Symonds, Bradshaw had friends in Windsor who may have alerted Bradshaw to the instrument’s availability.
by antique dealers to refer to square pianos’. The use of ‘spinet’ may have arisen as a response to the then unfamiliar shape and sound of square pianos. The ‘spinet’ was located in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was in fact a square piano made by Frederick Beck in 1780/86.

The instrument had been passed down through generations of the family who owned it—perhaps even since John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838. The owners of the instrument were adamant that it had come to Australia with the First Fleet. Although there was no documentary evidence proving that the instrument was George Worgan’s piano, the lady of the house recounted that the recurring mantra uttered by generations of mothers in the family to their children was: ‘Don’t bang on that piano; be careful with it, because it came out with the First Fleet.’ Accordingly, for generations, members of the family had been allowed to play the instrument only under the strictest supervision.

The piano was housed in the laundry, and the owners wished to sell the instrument in order to finance the purchase of a new washing machine.

Times and ideas change. In 1973, antique pianos were not always regarded or treated with the reverence that is often accorded to them today. If the owners’ attitude towards their Frederick Beck square piano was one of indifference (as the instrument’s storage context suggests), the fact that they told Bradshaw that the piano was the First Fleet piano is paradoxical; the owners were aware of the instrument’s historical importance, yet stored it in their laundry. Perhaps:

1) familiarity with the instrument had bred contempt; or 2) the laundry was the safest place for the instrument to be housed; or 3) space in their home was limited; or 4) the owners did not feel that the instrument was worthy of much respect because of its age.

The piano had fallen into a state of subtle disrepair. The owners may have been reticent to keep the instrument in good playing condition because of

1. financial constraints
2. the fact that they did not know of (or could not find) a restorer with the appropriate skills
3. their wish not to alter the fabric of the instrument through restoration for fear that information that could be of benefit to posterity might be lost

---

16 Burnett, *Company of Pianos*, p. 16.
18 Attempts by the author to locate anyone in Windsor who remembers the presence or sale of the Beck piano have proved fruitless; the trail leading to relevant data appears to have gone cold. History may sometimes blot out a paragraph here and there, but rarely does it tear out the leaves of a whole volume, leaving only a coloured frontispiece remaining to tease us. See West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, pp. 846–7.
(this seems unlikely, however, given the state of the instrument and its storage context)

4. a belief that because the instrument was both antiquated and unable to meet the musical demands inherent in nineteenth and twentieth-century keyboard repertoire, the piano was not worth the expenditure associated with restoring it to playing order

5. indecision resulting from the frustration of not knowing quite what to do with the instrument.

William Bradshaw believed the instrument to be surgeon Worgan’s piano, and purchased it immediately.

These details make up ‘provenance version one’. Provenance version one contradicts ‘provenance version two’,19 ‘provenance version three’20 and data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book.21

When the current owner of the 1780/86? Beck piano, Stewart Symonds, first saw the instrument in early October 1986, he obtained the piano’s provenance (conveyed in the form of provenance version one)22 from Bradshaw (the then owner of the instrument). Within the context of a conversation held between the author and Stewart Symonds on Sunday, 12 May 2013, Symonds recounted that Bradshaw had encouraged him to purchase the Frederick Beck piano not only by informing him of the instrument’s provenance, but also by stating ‘it should be in your collection’ as the instrument is ‘important to Australia’. When Symonds purchased the instrument from Bradshaw in mid-October 1986—that is, a week or two after first seeing it—Bradshaw reiterated provenance version one. Moreover, on each of the several occasions when Bradshaw took Symonds to dinner following Symonds’ acquisition of the instrument, Bradshaw used the circumstances to reiterate provenance version one.23
John Blackman in Windsor

John Blackman, the auctioneer who, according to Bradshaw/Symonds, sold the 1780/86? Beck piano to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney, established his salesrooms at 5 King Street, Sydney, on 29 March 1834. On Saturday, 26 February 1831, an advertisement published in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser mentions ‘Mr Blackman’ in connection with Windsor. The advertisement reads:

To Let.

Royal Oak Inn, Windsor.

To be let, that old established inn, now in full trade, and situate in Baker-street, with a coach-house, stables, &c.—The premises are too well known to need further description. For terms of letting, and other information, apply to Mr. Blackman, Windsor Hotel, Windsor; or, Mr. Richard Wm. Cobcroft, Wilberforce. 23d February, 1831.

Was the advertisement’s ‘Mr Blackman’ the auctioneer John Blackman, and if so, did Blackman (whilst in Windsor) forge a link with the family to whom he sold the 1780/86? Beck piano seven years later at auction, on 6 June 1838? After all,

1. according to Bradshaw/Symonds, the piano was purchased by the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney—that is, possibly Windsor

2. according to the advertisement published on 26 February 1831 in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, Blackman’s address (at least in late February 1831) was the Windsor Hotel, Windsor.

If the advertisement’s Mr Blackman is the auctioneer John Blackman, and if Blackman knew the family who purchased the Beck piano at his auction rooms on 6 June 1838, these suppositions (given their association with Windsor) viably unite with provenance version one.

Windsor, Floods and the Absence of Water Damage

When Governor Lachlan Macquarie arrived in New South Wales in 1810, he brought with him a letter of instruction from the Colonial Office outlining, amongst other things, the establishment of towns.

---

25 See Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 1 April 1834, p. 2.
27 See ‘1838: John Blackman’, in Chapter 14, this volume.
The letter indicates that the basic purpose of towns will be civil rather than military; that people should be grouped together for their civil concerns and security; towns were to be accessible, near to a river or the coast; there was to be a military presence, but there was also to be a town hall and other public buildings; there was to be a church and a school, along with lands allotted to sustain them …

In his zeal, Macquarie founded no less than five towns within as many weeks in December and January 1810–11, all within seven kilometers of each other. Windsor was to become the most important of these towns.28

There had, in fact, been a small settlement there before Macquarie’s time, called the Green Hills. A government granary had been built there, a town common had been set aside by Governor King, and a modest house built for the accommodation of the governor or other officials on ‘this sweet delightful spot’.29 Green Hills officially became known as Windsor in 1810.30 On Thursday, 6 December 1810, Governor Macquarie dined with a group of friends at Green Hills, after which, as he writes:

I christened the new townships, drinking a bumper to the success of each. I gave the name of Windsor to the town intended to be erected in the district of the Green Hills, in continuation of the present village, from the similarity of this situation to that of the same name in England.31

Windsor had all the stated attributes explicit in Governor Macquarie’s letter of instruction. It was situated on high ground on a navigable river (‘as the river silted up, a prosperous river trade declined’32 and the ‘commercial centre of the town shifted south towards the railway which was established in 1864’);33 Windsor had areas set aside for church and community affairs, a graveyard, church site, rectory site and glebe; it had military barracks (‘the first garrison had been stationed in Windsor since 1795’),34 courthouse and gaol, as well as a house for occupation by the Governor on his visits.35

Regulations were promulgated on 11 May 1811 for the orderly development of the town. No person was to build a house without

29 Ibid., p. 2. A watercolour drawing entitled The Settlement on the Green Hills, Hawksburgh River New South Wales, 1809, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXD 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313052).
32 The main businesses of the town were related to agriculture. See ibid., p. 108.
33 Ibid., p. 108.
34 Ibid., p. 105.
submitting a plan to the resident magistrate, and no town leases were to be granted without such a plan. The town allotments were not uniform in size, nor were the blocks arranged in regular squares.36

If George Worgan’s piano was sold at auction on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney (the farm being located near the newly established town of Windsor), the instrument, despite being at the time regarded as old-fashioned, would doubtless have aided the progress of the social aspirations of its new owners.

Given that Windsor and the area around it dedicated to farming are located in the Hawkesbury River flood zone, it is a miracle that Worgan’s piano was not overwhelmed in the waters of one of the many extensive floods that beset the region. During the first half of the nineteenth century,

almost every farm established in the district … was beside a river or a creek which flooded, sometimes disastrously. Countless settlers faced danger head-on … when the river rose to extreme heights and many of the farmhouses were under water. A great many farms had no high land, and so whole families were forced to shelter on the roofs of their dwellings.37

A report written in 1806 reveals the horrors endured by those seeking safety from the raging waters:

[T]orrents of rain pouring with unabating fury; and not a house … to be seen, the roofs of one or two of the highest on the opposite side of the water being … only visible … many were devoted to undergo a night of horror the most inexpressible … the dismal cries from distant quarters, the report of fire-arms dangerously charged in order to increase the noise of the explosion; the howling of dogs that had by swimming go[t] into trees, all concurred to shock the feelings of the few that were out of the reach, but were sorrowful spectators of the calamity they could not relieve.38

Some sought refuge on the roof of their house. For example, during the floods of 1806, Hannah Dight and Margaret Catchpole had to climb onto the roof. Margaret later wrote: ‘We had not binn thear [the loft] … befor the first chimley went dowen and middell warl went. Then I expected the next chimley to goo and all the warles and then to be crushed to dead. The weater was bout five feet deep in the howes at the time.’39

36 Ibid., p. 4.
38 Quoted in ibid., p. 415.
39 Quoted in ibid., p. 415.
Perhaps the home of the family who purchased Worgan’s piano was situated on the ‘higher grounds’ to which, during the 1806 floods, for example, ‘great numbers had been taken up and left in safety’. Or perhaps when floods threatened, the owners of Worgan’s piano had the foresight to remove the instrument from their flood-prone house to a place of known safety.

Regardless of how Worgan’s piano managed to survive the recurring and calamitous flooding of the Hawkesbury River during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it appears that the 1780/86? Beck square piano, in the absence of any apparent water damage (if the instrument was sold at auction on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm in the Hawkesbury River flood zone, and if the instrument remained in the area until Bradshaw acquired it in 1973), miraculously defied the turbulent waters and remained unscathed.

**Provenance Version Two: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano in London**

_Things are seldom what they seem;
Skim milk masquerades as cream._

The following provenance details first emerged within the context of a conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow on Saturday, 28 July 2012.

About 2006–07, Bradshaw informed Barrow ‘in a hushed voice’ that he had

1. purchased Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in London
2. scratched off the little round British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker after he had purchased the instrument.

These details make up ‘provenance version two’.

---

40 Ibid., p. 415.
42 Brian Barrow is an antiques restorer, fortepiano aficionado and owner of the Longman & Broderip square piano dated 1785/86? discussed in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
43 The substance of provenance version two re-emerged within the context of two further conversations between the author and Brian Barrow between 2012 and 2013.
Provenance version two contradicts

1. data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book
2. provenance version one
3. provenance version three.

If provenance version two is true then Bradshaw appears to have had no qualms in telling Stewart Symonds, one of his closest friends, on several occasions that he had purchased the Beck in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and that the instrument was the First Fleet piano. Such a disquieting inconsistency casts doubt upon the veracity of any provenance details attested to, and/or recounted by, Bradshaw.

Moreover, that Bradshaw would knowingly recount two contradictory provenances in relation to the same antique artefact appears to be inconsistent with his character. During the 1980s, Paul Kenny (the eminent antiques importer and Bradshaw’s close friend) regularly left Australia in order to purchase antiques. Kenny would meet Bradshaw in England, and, by combining resources, the two gentlemen would jointly ship new acquisitions to Australia. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013, Kenny remarked: ‘As far as I know, Bill [that is, Bradshaw] didn’t buy a Beck in London.’

Within the context of a telephone conversation held on Sunday, 28 July 2013 between the author and Brian Barrow’s brother Phillip, Phillip stated that, following inquiries he had made with relevant UK antiques dealers, he had found no anecdote or record concerning the sale of a Beck square piano.

There appears to be no evidence supporting the notion that Bradshaw purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano in London. It is reasonable to conjecture that provenance version two is not viable.

---

44 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
45 See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, below.
46 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor’, above.
47 See ibid.
49 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London

What, never?
No, never!
What, never?
Hardly ever!50

On Wednesday, 19 June 2013, the author held a telephone conversation with Brian Barrow. Within the context of this conversation, Barrow recalled that about 2006–07 Bradshaw informed him that he had

1. purchased Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London
2. scratched off the little round British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker after he had purchased the instrument.

These details comprise ‘provenance version three’.51

Provenance version three contradicts provenance versions one and two.

Provenance version three may, however, be interpreted as conforming with data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book.52

Provenance version three raises two significant questions: if the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the First Fleet piano, when and why was the instrument taken from Australia back to England—a sequence of events necessary in order for Bradshaw to purchase the Beck in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London? Conclusive evidence for this sequence of events has not yet come to light.

As things stand, it seems unlikely that the First Fleet piano returned to England.

Provenance version three implies that the British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker remained on the 1780/86? Beck square piano after its acquisition by the unidentified ‘someone who had purchased the instrument in London’. Having acquired the instrument from this unnamed person, Bradshaw subsequently scratched off the sticker.

50 Gilbert and Sullivan, H.M.S. Pinafore, Act I, ‘I Am the Captain of the Pinafore’.
51 The substance of provenance version three re-emerged within the context of one further conversation between the author and Brian Barrow in 2013.
52 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
During the second half of the twentieth century, some antiques dealers would place a British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker on an artefact for sale in order to increase that object’s status and value. Generally, antiques dealers rarely removed the sticker. That Bradshaw removed the British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker from the 1780/86? Beck piano after he had acquired the instrument is, to quote Paul Kenny, both ‘interesting’ and ‘peculiar’.

Why did Bradshaw remove the sticker? Perhaps he did so in order to create a false provenance trail; by removing evidence of the instrument’s recent origins in London, Bradshaw could advocate provenance version one. Such a discomforting proposition is—to say the least—extreme. Throughout his life, Bradshaw was commonly regarded as one of the most respected members of Australia’s antique dealers’ fraternity, and although he might ‘embellish’ a provenance story, ‘he wouldn’t invent; he was a truthful man’. On the balance of probabilities, it seems unlikely that Bradshaw, who enjoyed (and doubtless sought to maintain) his reputation as a trustworthy and respected antiques dealer, would fabricate a provenance.

Substantial incompatibilities exist between provenance version three—that is, Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London—and provenance version one—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano.

Given the presence of these incompatibilities, and also the fact that Bradshaw, according to Brian Barrow, recounted provenance version three ‘in a hushed voice’ (an odd behaviour for Bradshaw), if provenance version three or one is true, doubt must be cast upon the veracity of any provenance details attested to, and/or provided by, Bradshaw.

If Paul Kenny’s recollection that Bradshaw did not buy a Beck in London is correct, and details in William Bradshaw’s stock book entry concerning his purchase of the 1780/86? Beck piano on 29 October 1973 are accurate (and there is no reason or evidence suggesting that the records are anything other than true), provenance version three becomes viable.

---

53 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information. During the second half of the twentieth century, Australia’s cultural cringe was a potent and pervasive force.
54 These remarks were made within the context of a telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013.
56 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
Another Path of Investigation: Kenneth Muggleston’s memories and George Worgan’s piano in Windsor

On Sunday, 24 November 2013, the author received an email from the independent filmmaker Joel Daniel Robinson (b. 1975). Robinson, within the context of research for his documentary entitled The Devil’s Wilderness, had spoken with Kenneth Muggleston (b. 1930), an Australian-born British Oscar-winning set decorator and production designer, whose illustrious career included movies such as Lawrence of Arabia (1962), Doctor Zhivago (1965), The Taming of the Shrew (1967), Oliver! (1968), Waterloo (1970) and The Piano (1993). Robinson’s email includes remarks made by Muggleston that are pertinent not only to the First Fleet piano, but also to Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86 Frederick Beck square piano. Muggleston’s remarks seem to lend weight to those made by Bradshaw at the time he sold the 1780/86 Beck piano to Symonds—that is, the instrument was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano.

For many years (on and off), Bradshaw employed Muggleston as his ‘gentleman’s gentleman’. Not only did Muggleston shop, cook and clean for Bradshaw, but also, given that Bradshaw did not have a drivers’ licence and Muggleston did, he was on occasion Bradshaw’s chauffeur. It was Muggleston who, at the front door of Bradshaw’s shop, would often extend the initial greeting to visitors.

Muggleston recalled to Robinson that Bradshaw had owned the First Fleet piano, and that the instrument had come from the Macarthur-Onslow family. The Macarthur-Onslows are direct descendants of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Unfortunately, Muggleston could not remember exactly why he associated the Macarthur-Onslows with the piano. Muggleston had the strong impression that the instrument was Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86 Beck.

In 1974, Muggleston returned to Australia from Italy to accept a job as a drama designer at the then Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation; ABC). Muggleston recalled that within that context, he had worked with a Macarthur-Onslow. It is reasonable to conjecture that whilst employed by the ABC, Muggleston encountered Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison (1932–2008). The

---

59 A film inspired by and concerning colonial expansion across the Blue Mountains in New South Wales.
60 Kenneth Muggleston won an Oscar in 1969 in the category ‘Best Set Decoration’ for the film Oliver! (1968). This award was one of the film’s six Oscars.
61 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
moniker ‘Red’ was given to Harrison because of his florid complexion. Harrison was the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio correspondent in Sydney, and between 1981 and 1986, presenter of ABC Radio’s flagship current affairs program, AM. Apart from his journalistic prowess, Harrison possessed diverse skills, not the least of which was manifested by his proficiency as a classical pianist. Harrison owned a baby grand piano and an upright piano. Harrison’s second marriage, in 1971, was to the trained horticulturalist, technical and further education (TAFE) teacher and gardening columnist for Sydney’s Sun Herald newspaper, Pamela Jane Macarthur-Onslow (1936–2012). Harrison and Pamela lived at Macquarie Grove, Camden, a property adjoining the Camden Park estate established by John Macarthur in 1806.

It is reasonable to suppose that Harrison and/or Pamela spoke to Muggleston about the First Fleet piano.

The Macarthur-Onslow family owned a dairy farm 17 kilometres from Windsor, the Gilbulla Stud Farm, at Grose Wold (Gilbulla had the only pure-blood Jersey cows outside Jersey Island itself).

If Bradshaw purchased the First Fleet piano from the Macarthur-Onslows at Gilbulla, was he protecting the owners’ privacy (often wealthy/eminent people do not want it known that they are selling any of their possessions) by vaguely stating to Symonds that he had purchased the instrument at an ‘old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor’?

On Thursday, 5 December 2013, the author visited Sandra Ruth Macarthur-Onslow (b. 1936) at her home. Sandra lived at Gilbulla between ca 1939 and 1949 (she left Gilbulla 24 years before Bradshaw’s acquisition of the 1780/86? Beck square piano).

Conjecture aside, and given that a single fact can spoil a good argument,

1. Sandra Macarthur-Onslow recalled that during the period of her upbringing at Gilbulla Stud Farm (ca 1939–49), there had been no piano there (she also remarked that there was only one homestead on the property)

---

65 I am indebted to Susan Hayman—a descendant of Elizabeth Macarthur—for information regarding Harrison’s pianos, which emerged within the context of a telephone conversation with the author, Monday, 30 December 2013.
66 Camden Park House, completed in 1835 and located on the Camden Park estate, is the oldest private residence in Australia that is still owned and occupied by descendants of its original family; it remains a home, not a museum. ‘The word “park” was most used to describe forested land by the first settlers, who assumed that Australian landscapes were natural pastures.’ B. Gammage, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011), pp. 14–15.
67 I am indebted to Sandra Macarthur-Onslow for this information.
2. Kenneth Muggleston clearly remembers that he never chauffeured Bradshaw ‘as far out’\textsuperscript{68} of Sydney as Windsor.

Perhaps during the 24 years between Sandra Macarthur-Onslow leaving Gilbulla in 1949 and Bradshaw’s acquisition of the 1780/86? Beck square piano in 1973, descendents of Elizabeth Macarthur came to regard their First Fleet piano as being so old-fashioned that they relocated it from their ancestral seat at either Elizabeth Farm cottage or Camden Park to Gilbulla Stud Farm. Furthermore, and for the same reason, any one of Elizabeth Macarthur’s descendents may have sold the instrument.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Susan Hayman—a descendant of Elizabeth Macarthur—on Monday, 30 December 2013, Susan recalled that her father, James Arthur Macarthur-Onslow (1898–1959), was particularly annoyed when his mother Enid—wife of James William Macarthur-Onslow (1867–1946), the great-grandson of Elizabeth Macarthur—sold a piano that had been located at Camden Park House. The sale of this instrument took place during the early 1940s—a date reminiscent of the 1942 sale by the Mat(t)hews family, whose home was located in the vicinity of Parramatta, of Brian Barrow’s 1785/86? Longman & Broderip square piano to William Bradshaw.\textsuperscript{69} Susan Hayman was unaware of the type or provenance of this piano. Apparently, Enid Macarthur-Onslow ‘sold so many things’.\textsuperscript{70}

Paul Kenny’s observation seems apposite: ‘The Macarthur–Onslow connection with pianos has always been the stuff of myths and legends.’\textsuperscript{71}

Notwithstanding Sandra Macarthur-Onslow’s statements and Kenny’s observation, Kenneth Muggleston’s recollections (although comprising hearsay) appear elusively to relate to Bradshaw’s assertions that

1. at John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838, the 1780/86? Beck square piano was sold to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney—that is, Windsor

2. he had purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano from a family in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor

3. the 1780/86? Beck square piano had been passed down through generations of the family who owned it

\textsuperscript{68} Email from Joel Robinson to the author, 29 November 2013, in which Robinson recounts some of the words uttered to him by Kenneth Muggleston within the context of a recent conversation.

\textsuperscript{69} See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{70} Email from Rosemary Freeman—daughter of Susan Hayman—to the author, 5 January 2014.

\textsuperscript{71} Email from Paul Kenny to the author, 3 December 2013.
4. the owners of the instrument were adamant that it had come to Australia with the First Fleet.

Of one thing Muggleston seems certain: any who regard Brian Barrow’s 1785/86 Longman & Broderip square piano as the First Fleet piano72 ‘are deluding themselves’.73

It is logical to surmise that Muggleston was aware that Bradshaw had owned the First Fleet piano because he had spent time working for Bradshaw. Bradshaw may have shown him the instrument (Bradshaw owned the 1780/86 Beck square piano between 1973 and 1986). Moreover, it is reasonable to speculate that it was Bradshaw who informed Muggleston that the instrument was connected with the Macarthur-Onslow family.

On Thursday 23 January 2014, the author held a telephone conversation with Annette Rosemary Macarthur-Onslow (b. 1933)—sister of Pamela Harrison, the wife of Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison; when, approximately seven weeks before, the author had visited Sandra Macarthur-Onslow at her home, she mentioned that Annette knew much of the history of the Macarthur-Onslow family’s furniture. Annette made no mention of Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison ever having owned either the First Fleet piano or a square piano. Furthermore, Annette (like Sandra) had no remembrance of there ever having been a piano at Gilbulla Stud Farm. Annette was not aware of the circumstances associated with Enid Macarthur-Onslow’s selling (during the early 1940s) of a piano that had been located at Camden Park House.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Macarthurs established Camden Park House as the repository of the family’s archives.

Elizabeth Macarthur’s journals and correspondence … would establish the foundations of this archive. Her sons would improve on this most notably James [1798–1867] and William [1800–82] who saved all their personal papers—thirty boxes and 296 large volumes of which are now in the State Library of New South Wales.

… Later descendents … would also continue the tradition of ‘never throwing anything away’, so that the Macarthur papers on the public record continue well into the 21st century.74

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Joel Robinson on Friday, 24 January 2014, Robinson recalled that at some time

---

72 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
73 Email from Joel Robinson to the author, 29 November 2013, in which Robinson recounts some of the words uttered to him by Kenneth Muggleston within the context of a recent conversation.
during November 2013 he had spoken not only with the archivists of Camden Park House, but also with the current owner/occupants of that historic home, John Gregory Macarthur-Stanham and his wife Edwina.75

The archivists informed Robinson that they had not located any evidence concerning the presence of the First Fleet piano (or of a square piano) at Camden Park House. Furthermore, John Macarthur-Stanham told Robinson that he had no knowledge of a square piano ever having been located at Camden Park House.

An oil painting by Thomas Watling (1762–ca 1814) entitled ‘A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove’—the earliest oil painting of Sydney76—functions as an analogy for connections (real or fantastical) between the First Fleet piano and the descendents of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Just as the ‘neat … Georgian buildings of Sydney Town keep to a [luminous] harbour shoreline … [encircled] by a dark forest wilderness’,77 so too the fate of the First Fleet piano is encircled by a dark wilderness comprising confusions of hearsay and the sometimes confounding complexities of Australian colonial history.

New Horizons: Stewart Symonds

If Bradshaw believed the 1780/86? Beck piano was the First Fleet piano,78 it is not surprising that he purchased the instrument for inclusion in his personal collection, rather than as an antique for sale. His intention is revealed by his atypical purchase book entry: ‘Square Piano by Beck for self’ (emphasis added) (Plate 133). (Then again, the instrument’s high-quality casework, elegant cabriole legs and unique campaign-furniture-inspired stand may also have given Bradshaw enough reason to acquire the piano for himself.)

Inexplicably, Bradshaw does not seem to have made much of a fuss over his ownership of what may have been the First Fleet piano. In a conversation held on Wednesday, 19 June 2013 between the author and Bradshaw’s friend Brian Barrow,79 Barrow revealed that he had ‘met every piano’ that Bradshaw owned, and had no memory of ever seeing the 1780/86? Beck instrument at Bradshaw’s shop/home.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny—a reliable source of much information concerning Bradshaw—on

75 John Macarthur-Stanham is the great-great-great-great-grandson of John Macarthur.
76 T. Watling, A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove (1794): oil on canvas; 91 x 121 centimetres. This painting is currently housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
78 See ‘Intersections’, below.
79 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
Wednesday, 7 August 2013, Kenny (a man blessed with an alert mind and keen memory) recounted that on Monday, 13 August 1973, he had departed from Australia to live for a time in England. As a result, Kenny ‘missed’ Bradshaw’s purchase of the Beck piano, which, according to Bradshaw’s stock book, took place on Monday, 29 October 1973 (approximately two and a half months after Kenny’s departure). Consequently, Kenny knew little about the circumstances surrounding Bradshaw’s acquisition of the instrument.

The author first met William Bradshaw at the end of winter 1974—that is, 10 months after Bradshaw had acquired the Beck square piano from Adam Barber. This initial encounter was followed by regular visits to Bradshaw’s shop/home over the course of the ensuing three years. During many of these visits, Bradshaw enthusiastically showed the author his extensive piano collection, which comprised an unbelievable number of instruments housed in the attic, rooms, hallways, shop and freestanding garage and workshop of his terrace house/shop at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney. Like Brian Barrow, the author has no memory of ever seeing (within the context of these visits) the 1780/86? Beck square piano. Of course, this does not mean that Bradshaw did not have the Beck piano in his possession; Bradshaw could have stored the instrument out of sight and/or inaccessibly anywhere in his home.

The 1780/86? Beck piano emerged from hiding in early October 1986, when Stewart Symonds first saw the instrument ‘in passing’ during one of his almost weekly visits to William Bradshaw’s shop. At the time, Bradshaw informed Symonds of the instrument’s provenance. The instrument was housed in the large freestanding, uninsulated red-brick garage and workshop at the rear of Bradshaw’s shop/home. Over the years, grand pianos and square pianos had vied for space in this backyard structure; the building was filled with the many instruments owned by Bradshaw for which there was no room in his terrace house.

80 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
81 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
82 In this building in 1973, the author was privileged to hear Ferrucio Busoni’s (1866–1924) astonishing ‘reproducing piano roll’ performance of Frédéric Chopin’s (1810–49) ‘Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Opus 23’, played on a Bechstein grand ‘reproducing piano’. Reproducing piano rolls are an early form of recording. They can be easily confused with the domestic pianola roll, as they look similar. Unlike the pianola roll, however, on the reproducing piano roll every subtlety and nuance of the recorded performance is captured. Such rolls began to appear during the early twentieth century. They effectively died out as a result of the Depression in the 1930s. Reproducing pianos have a unique pneumatic mechanism, specific only for playing reproducing piano rolls. Such instruments were rare even in their heyday (1905 – ca 1935). The instruments were produced by a handful of piano manufacturers. These manufacturers built pianos that could only play rolls exclusively designed for their instruments. The early twentieth century’s greatest pianists and composers recorded reproducing piano rolls—for example: Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Ignaz Friedman (1882–1948), George Gershwin (1898–1937), Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938), Edvard Grieg (1843–1907), Josef Hofmann (1876–1957), Josef Lhévinne (1874–1944), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953), Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943), Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), Artur Schnabel (1882–1951), Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971).
Bradshaw did not venture out of Australia in order to acquire antiques until Monday, 8 June 1970. On this trip, Bradshaw

1. travelled to England via America
2. stayed in San Francisco with the sister of Kevin Fahey, an eminent expert on early colonial furniture in New South Wales and Tasmania
3. arrived in the United Kingdom on Sunday, 14 June
4. returned to Australia on Friday, 31 July.

During the 1980s, Bradshaw regularly left Australia—sometimes three times a year—to acquire antiques. In the 1980s, Bradshaw’s first trip in each year usually took place ca March/April, at the end of the English winter. At this time of year, antiques buyers from England and the Continent tended not to venture out into the cold to buy. As a consequence, English antiques shops were well stocked because turnover was slow. This meant that often dealers would offer Bradshaw substantial discounts on his purchases.

About April 1986, Bradshaw returned from England with, amongst other things, an 1817 George Brysson (fl. 1824–30) square piano. On Thursday, 15 May 1986, Stewart Symonds paid a deposit to purchase the Brysson instrument. On Tuesday, 14 October 1986, Symonds made the second and final payment. The total purchase price of the instrument was approximately A$900. ‘One could always “buy well” from Bill Bradshaw. This ability to magically procure the important and rare at a level that allowed ordinary collectors a chance was the essence of his reputation as a dealer.’ Bradshaw’s ‘magnet-like ability to attract objects and find missing objects … [was] uncanny … If he bought a decanter without a stopper, the stopper would come to him. If he bought five chairs, the sixth matching one would come to him.’

Approximately one month after his return from England—that is, ca May 1986—Bradshaw spent two weeks in the United States purchasing American antique furniture. He returned not only with many articles dating from 1800 to ca 1830, but also with a square piano made in New York in 1853 by Martins

---

83 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information; the data pertaining to travel dates were obtained from Bradshaw’s passport. Paul Kenny was one of William Bradshaw’s closest friends, and an importer of fine antiques. Following Bradshaw’s death on Wednesday, 18 November 2009, Kenny moved Bradshaw’s household/shop effects into his own warehouse, subsequently making these effects available to auctioneers for valuation. Kenny currently possesses Bradshaw’s passport and business records.
84 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information. Paul Kenny recalls that Bradshaw usually ventured overseas once a year (telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny, Tuesday, 2 July 2013.)
85 Serial number 462. George Brysson was both a piano maker and a piano dealer, whose premises were at 18 Bridgehouse Place, Newington, London. See Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, p. 64.
86 Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’.
87 Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.
& Ouvrier. On Saturday, 14 June 1986, almost immediately after Bradshaw had returned from America, Stewart Symonds purchased the Martins & Ouvrier instrument.

In mid-October 1986, a week or two after first seeing the 1780/86? Beck piano, Symonds placed a deposit of A$1000 to purchase the instrument from Bradshaw. The receipt for Stewart Symonds' deposit reads: ‘Received from … Esq. the sum of $1,000 deposit on a late-18th century square piano in mahogany on a stand … With thanks, W. F. Bradshaw.’

Symonds subsequently made three further payments for the instrument—on
1. Monday, 17 November 1986
2. Thursday, 18 December 1986

The total purchase price of the instrument was A$3800.88 In 1986, this was a large amount of money to pay for a square piano. The price reflects not only the instrument’s rarity and elegance, but also its heritage value.

An Instrument ‘Drained’

Why did Bradshaw wait 13 years before selling the 1780/86? Beck piano? In fact, given the instrument’s cultural significance, it is surprising that Bradshaw elected to sell it at all, rather than keeping the instrument as a part of his formidable personal piano collection.89 Bradshaw, however, in his own enigmatic words, would only keep a piano or piece of antique furniture for himself until he had ‘drained it’.90

After Bradshaw had ‘drained’ an instrument, he was often reluctant to part with it. Bradshaw, however, had no room to store every instrument that he acquired, nor could he afford to keep every piano that he purchased. In such circumstances, his friend Stewart Symonds was usually given first offer to buy the drained instrument. Consequently, Symonds became one of Bradshaw’s biggest clients.91

88 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for information concerning both Bradshaw’s travels in 1986 and Symonds’ purchases prior to acquiring the 1780/86? Beck piano.
89 Apart from the instrument’s proposed association with George Worgan, it was—and still is—the only piano located in Australia made by Frederick Beck, and is one of 32 extant Frederick Beck instruments. See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
90 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
91 I am further indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
It may be argued that Bradshaw’s intention when purchasing the Beck piano on 29 October 1973 was to reduce his tax bill in the future. Bradshaw would have known that the eventual sale of such a culturally significant instrument would yield a considerable profit (Bradshaw purchased the instrument on 29 October 1973 for A$150, and sold the piano in mid-1986 for A$3800—a substantial return of A$3650.)

In 1973, Bradshaw’s stock book entry ‘Square piano by Beck for self’ indicates that he did not categorise the instrument as shop stock; the piano is described as Bradshaw’s private property. A quiet sale of the instrument sometime after its acquisition (as it turned out, 13 years) would ensure that earnings from the sale were kept ‘off the radar’. Since the piano was Bradshaw’s private property, the instrument could not be regarded as a generator of taxable income derived from his business.

When Stewart Symonds purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano from Bradshaw in mid-October 1986, payment was made by cheque. If Bradshaw had hoped to disguise his taxable earnings, a quiet sale for cash would have been more expedient, and yet Bradshaw made no request that cash be involved in the transaction. Furthermore, Bradshaw created a paper trail by providing Symonds with a receipt.

It could be conjectured that in 1973 Bradshaw did not acquire the Beck piano for himself92 as a tax dodge, but rather (perhaps) as a response to his belief not only that the instrument was the First Fleet piano, but also that such an important instrument would sit well in his personal collection. Until the Beck piano’s eventual sale to Stewart Symonds 13 years later, in mid-October 1986, Bradshaw kept the instrument until he had ‘drained it’.

**Bradshaw is Caught Out?**

Having informed Stewart Symonds of the 1780/86? Beck piano’s provenance (in the form of provenance version one) when Symonds first saw the instrument in early October 1986, Bradshaw subsequently reiterated the piano’s provenance

1. when Symonds purchased the instrument in mid-October 1986

2. on each of the several occasions when Bradshaw took Symonds to dinner following Symonds’ acquisition of the instrument.93

Within the context of a conversation held between the author and Stewart Symonds on Sunday, 12 May 2013, Symonds recounted that Bradshaw had encouraged him to purchase the 1780/86? Beck square piano not only by

---

92 See Plate 133.
93 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for information concerning Bradshaw’s reiteration of the 1780/86? Beck square piano’s provenance.
informing him of the instrument’s Windsor-related provenance, but also by stating: ‘it should be in your collection’, as the instrument is ‘important to Australia’. Symonds also recounted that when he gave Bradshaw a deposit to purchase the Beck piano in mid-October 1986, Bradshaw asked him not to ‘brag about it’, and not to ‘make a noise’ about owning the instrument or in relation to the instrument’s provenance.

Bradshaw’s remark invites concern in relation to his motives for making such a request. Perhaps

1. Bradshaw had altered his view concerning the significance of the 1785/86 Longman & Broderip piano that Brian Barrow had purchased from him 17 years earlier (Bradshaw told Barrow, on several occasions, that the instrument had once belonged to Elizabeth Macarthur and was most likely the First Fleet piano)

2. Bradshaw was not as certain as he appeared to be about the significance of the 1780/86? Beck square piano that he had just sold to Symonds.

In either case, Bradshaw’s request suggests that he did not want to be ‘caught out’ one way or another. (‘Noël Godin [b. 1945], the great Belgian entarteur or pie-thrower, observes that a great deal about a person’s character is revealed in the first seconds after they’ve been hit by a pie.’) One could speculate that Bradshaw had—in response to provenance information associated with the Beck piano he had purchased on 29 October 1973—revised his opinion concerning the significance of the 1785/86? Longman & Broderip piano that he had sold to Brian Barrow four years before, in 1969. In other words, new and more recent information had resulted in the formation of new conclusions. (In the reassuring words of Marcus Aurelius: ‘Remember that to change thy mind and to follow him that sets thee right, is to be none the less a free agent.’) It is also reasonable to speculate that the Beck piano’s Windsor-related/First Fleet piano provenance is a fabrication.

94 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor’, above.
95 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication. Bradshaw sold the Longman & Broderip instrument to Brian Barrow on 29 May 1969.
96 See ibid.
97 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’ and ‘George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor’, above.
100 Marcus Aurelius (121–80), quoted in Myers and Scanzoni, What God has Joined Together, p. 8.
101 See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, above.
Intersections

The final section of an article written by Heather Clarke, entitled ‘Australian Colonial Dance: Australia’s First Piano’, comprises ‘17 Responses to “Australia’s First Piano”’. On Wednesday, 12 December 2012, ‘Sandy’ posted the following ‘response’:

Way back in the 70’s I had a friend who worked in an antique shop in Woollahra, a very well-off Eastern suburb of Sydney.

He showed me a piano his boss thought was the First Fleet piano (all I have is a vague memory of a rectangular box).

According to Paul Kenny, Sandy’s friend may have been John Reilly, a well-known amateur diver who lived in Randwick, Sydney. Reilly’s business activities involved the supply and installation of security alarms, and it was within this professional context that he first met Bradshaw. Bradshaw affectionately referred to Reilly either as ‘The Princess Kinkara’ (because of Reilly’s tea-making abilities) or as the ‘Mermaid’. The two men irrevocably fell out with one another after a Georgian teapot was thrown at Bradshaw. No damage was done except to the teapot, and thus the friendship was ended.

Sandy, however, recalls that the initials of her friend may have been ‘KL, a name I vaguely remember’, thereby rendering Paul Kenny’s proposal moot.

On Sunday, 19 May 2013, Sandy appended another response: ‘The only other thing I can remember definitely is that the shop was on the Sydney side of Queen St & I vaguely remember we were upstairs, so it was at least 2-storeys,—as were all the other shops in the street.’

Using Sandy’s comments as a basis for conjecture, the instrument in question may be Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86 Frederick Beck square piano. This is because certain facts associated with the Beck instrument appear to conform with Sandy’s recollections:

- ‘Way back in the 70’s’ (emphasis added), William Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano, on 29 October 1973 (Plate 133); after acquiring the Beck, Bradshaw kept the instrument for 13 years
• ‘an antique shop in Woollahra’ (emphasis added): William Bradshaw’s antiques shop was at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra

• ‘the shop was on the Sydney side of Queen St & I vaguely remember we were upstairs, so it was at least 2-storeys’: the description is consistent with the location and design of William Bradshaw’s antiques shop at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra

• ‘his boss’ (emphasis added): this may have been William Bradshaw

• ‘his boss thought [the piano] was the First Fleet piano’ (emphasis added): was the instrument the square piano by Beck that Bradshaw acquired for himself on 29 October 1973?;¹⁰⁸ provenance version one—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano¹⁰⁹—or provenance version three¹¹⁰ may be relevant (provenance version three raises the questions: when and why was the First Fleet piano taken back to England)

• ‘all I have is a vague memory of a rectangular box’ (emphasis added): this is consistent with the shape of a square piano; the 1780/86? Beck is a square piano.

It is logical to propose that Sandy’s ‘First Fleet piano’ is Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Federick Beck square piano; Sandy’s recollections certainly seem to point in that direction. Attempts made by the author to contact Sandy have been unsuccessful. Unfortunately, as is so often the case when attempting to conclusively identify the First Fleet piano, provenance and hypothesis are largely based on hearsay.

Varney Monk

Within the context of the telephone conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow on Wednesday, 19 June 2013, Barrow proposed that the Beck piano may have been owned at one time by the Australian composer Varney Monk (née Peterson; 1892–1967), who had a collection of pianos. Barrow continued by informing the author that his speculation was based upon pronouncements published in Heather Clarke’s article ‘Australia’s First Piano’.¹¹¹

Clarke, in the section of her article devoted to ‘Responses to “Australia’s First Piano”’, posted a ‘response’ on Sunday, 10 February 2013. Citing Scott Carlin, currently the Manager of House Museums at the Tasmanian Museum and Art

¹⁰⁹ See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
¹¹⁰ See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, above.
¹¹¹ Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance’.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

Gallery, Hobart, as her source, Clarke wrote: ‘In the 1960s Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by a Mrs Varney Monk … This comment from Scott Carlin.’

Clarke’s/Carlin’s description of the instrument as ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano’ tends to muddy the waters a little; it is unclear whether or not the instrument is the First Fleet piano or the instrument that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810. Given that Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments appear in an article entitled ‘Australia’s First Piano’, however, it is reasonable to assume that ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano’ refers to the First Fleet piano.

Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments do not contain information pertaining either to who had reported that ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’ or why ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Scott Carlin on Tuesday, 6 August 2013, Carlin revealed that the source of information from which his comment was derived was Lesley Harwin, a curator at the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales who had been tasked with the custodianship of property in Parramatta associated with Elizabeth Macarthur.

When Brian Barrow’s second version of events (that is, Bradshaw had acquired Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London) is combined with his speculation based on Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments (that is, the individual who purchased the Beck piano in London may have been Varney Monk), the following proposition ensues.

---

113 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur Purchases Thomas Laycock’s Piano’, in Chapter 13, this volume. See also ‘Brian Barrow’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano: Elizabeth Macarthur’s Second Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
115 Ibid.
Varney Monk’s Piano is Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Frederick Beck

This proposition is based on two assumptions:

1. Clarke’s/Carlin’s comment that ‘[i]n the 1960s Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’¹¹⁷ is true

2. the Beck’s provenance as communicated by Bradshaw to Stewart Symonds—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old house on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano¹¹⁸—is false (thereby rendering feasible Barrow’s second version of events,¹¹⁹ as well as his speculation regarding Varney Monk).

If these two assumptions are embraced, a connection between the 1780/86? Beck and Varney Monk may be proposed.

Varney Monk lived near Sirius Cove, Mosman, ‘overlooking Sydney Harbour’.¹²⁰ She died, aged 75, on Tuesday, 7 February 1967.¹²¹ Bradshaw’s stock book (Plate 133) reveals that he acquired the Beck piano on Monday, 29 October 1973, six years after Monk’s death. Within the context of the telephone conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow on Wednesday, 19 June 2013, Barrow conjectured that the reason six years had elapsed between Monk’s death in 1967 and Bradshaw’s acquisition of the Beck piano in 1973 from Adam Barber may have been the protracted winding up of Monk’s estate. No evidence can be found, however, pertaining to an extended time frame for the granting of probate in relation to Monk’s estate.

On Saturday, 7 March 1970, three years after Varney Monk’s death, her husband, the violinist Cyril Farnsworth Monk (1882–1970), died, aged 88.¹²² Probate on his estate was granted to Ian Maxim Monk (1915–78), Cyril and Varney’s son, on Monday, 6 April 1970.¹²³

It is reasonable to propose that if Varney Monk was the individual who had purchased the Beck piano in London, the instrument may eventually, upon her...

---

¹¹⁸ See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
¹¹⁹ See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, above.
death in 1967, have passed into the custodianship of her husband, Cyril. Upon Cyril’s death in 1970, the instrument may subsequently have passed into the hands of Varney and Cyril’s son, Ian.

Note that if the provenance of the Beck piano as communicated by Bradshaw to Stewart Symonds—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano—is true, the instrument cannot have been owned by Varney Monk. This is because that particular history of the 1780/86? Beck piano’s ownership presents an unbroken line of progress from: 1) an unnamed family living in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor; through 2) William Bradshaw; to 3) Stewart Symonds.

If Varney Monk was the individual who purchased the Beck piano in London, and if the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the First Fleet piano, several significant questions emerge:

1. When was the instrument taken from Australia back to England—an event necessary in order for Bradshaw to purchase the Beck in Australia from someone (Adam Barber?) who had purchased the instrument in London?
2. Why was the instrument taken from Australia back to England?
3. When did the piano pass into the hands of Adam Barber?
4. Why did the piano pass into the hands of Adam Barber?

No evidence has yet been found that supports the notion that the First Fleet piano was ever taken from Australia back to England.

**Varney Monk in Windsor**

Evidence suggests that in late 1934? or early 1935? Varney Monk spent several days in Windsor. On Friday, 4 January 1935, the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* published an article dealing with Windsor’s influence on Varney Monk in relation to the genesis of her second opera, ‘The Cedar Tree’. The newspaper article reveals that Monk ‘spent many happy days at Windsor browsing round’.

If at any time Varney Monk owned the 1780/86? Beck square piano, there may (or may not) be a connection between her visit to Windsor and her (supposed) ownership of the instrument. Furthermore, if Varney Monk acquired the Beck as a result of her Windsor sojourn then perhaps certain elements of the Beck’s provenance as recounted by Bradshaw to Symonds in late 1986—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and

---

124 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
Far from the Public Eye

The 1780/86? Beck square piano now sits in the entrance hallway of Stewart Symonds’ single-storey sandstone Georgian home in Ermington, Sydney, where it nestles against the bent-side of a Joseph Kirckman\(^{129}\) grand piano dated 1809? (Plate 133b). That such a culturally significant square piano should stand next to this particular grand piano seems appropriate, for the Kirckman may be the sixth-earliest extant Joseph Kirckman grand piano.\(^{130}\)

Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano is the only extant late eighteenth-century English square piano with hinged legs whose case dimensions and fully chromatic five-octave keyboard compass reflect late eighteenth-century norms (from a late eighteenth-century perspective, the instrument’s size and compass render it a ‘piano’ in both the commonly encountered and the fullest senses). That the instrument has intricately decorated casework, cabriole legs and a unique stand designed to be quickly disassembled, packed away, transported and reassembled without using tools reinforces not only its distinctiveness and its campaign furniture aesthetic, but also its hypothetical appropriateness for participation in the First Fleet’s epic journey to Botany Bay—a journey presenting contexts within which the instrument’s portability was requisite.

By favouring this hypothesis, the author chooses not to avoid a certain amount of partisan emphasis.\(^{131}\) A willingness, however, to remain open-minded (especially

---

126 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
127 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
128 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
130 See Watson, *Clinkscale Online*.
131 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
in the absence of irrefutable evidence) reflects the author’s hope that proof will emerge at some stage in the future that enables conclusive identification of the First Fleet piano to occur.

For early twenty-first-century lovers of musical art, experiencing the sonic and visual beauty of pianos made during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may help to create fluency in practices ‘that traditions of the spirit’ value—for example, ‘scrutiny of the past, open communication across the ages, a reluctance to judge by appearances, and the recognition that the dead … speak’ to us through the voices of their musical instruments, instruments that are inherently ‘a kind of music’.132

George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano, with its unique design elements, achingly beautiful sound and multifarious history, now sits encircled by a sprawling suburban Sydney, ‘and further back still’, encircled by ‘the indifference of’ most of our ‘contemporaries … and further back still’, encircled by the care of a few individuals who seek consolation from the emptiness of mass consumerism in their private good taste.133

The First Fleet piano, along with its instrumental contemporaries, is exaltation—after all, as music lovers know, there is ‘a subtler drunkenness than comes of wine’.134

In relation to the First Fleet piano, observations pertaining to Australian history published in 1897 by the American author and adventurer Mark Twain (1835–1910) are appropriate: the history of the First Fleet piano is ‘always picturesque; indeed, it is … curious and strange. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies. And all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises, and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities.’135

133 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, p. 27. See also A. West, Australia Now: Inside the Lifestyles of the Rich & Tasteful (North Melbourne: Pluto Press Australia, 2006), p. 15.
134 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, p. 776.
135 M. Twain, Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World (Hartford, Conn.: The American Publishing Company, 1898), Project Gutenberg eBook, No. 2895.h.html, (Last updated 18 October 2012), Chapter XVI.
Plate 133b George Worgan’s Beck square piano nestling against the bent-side of a grand piano by Joseph Kirckman, dated 1809?.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
This text is taken from The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View, Volume One, by Geoffrey Lancaster, published 2015 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.