



A GIFT TO THE CITY

THE ROLAND POPE COLLECTION

PRESENTED BY NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY AND NEWCASTLE REGION LIBRARY





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EXHIBITION DATES:

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY 15 AUGUST - 1 NOVEMBER 2015

NEWCASTLE REGION LIBRARY 15 AUGUST - 31 OCTOBER 2015

FOREWORD

Newcastle Art Gallery and Newcastle Region Library is proud to present *A Gift to the City – the Roland Pope Collection*.

This partnership exhibition, held across both cultural institutions, celebrates the 70th anniversary of Dr Roland Pope's generous donation of art and literature in July 1945 that established the foundations for the art gallery and library collections.

Pope's gift of over 2000 books and over 100 works of art was made on the provision that a library and art gallery be built by Newcastle City Council to house this important gift.

This act of benefaction, with such conditions, was a brave challenge by Pope to the governing authority of Newcastle. Despite having no direct connection to Newcastle, Pope saw a future for the city, which in 1945 was still enduring the austerity and hardship of World War II. Pope's vision for the city was greater than that of a hardened industrial outpost. As the second largest city in New South Wales, Newcastle's role as the 'iron lung' of the state had belied its capacity for culture and creativity.

Through Pope's benefaction, the role of art and literature in the 'steel city' could take prominence, with the additional investment of a library and art gallery for the citizens of the city.

Most importantly, Pope's act of generosity led the way for subsequent benefaction to both the art gallery and library.

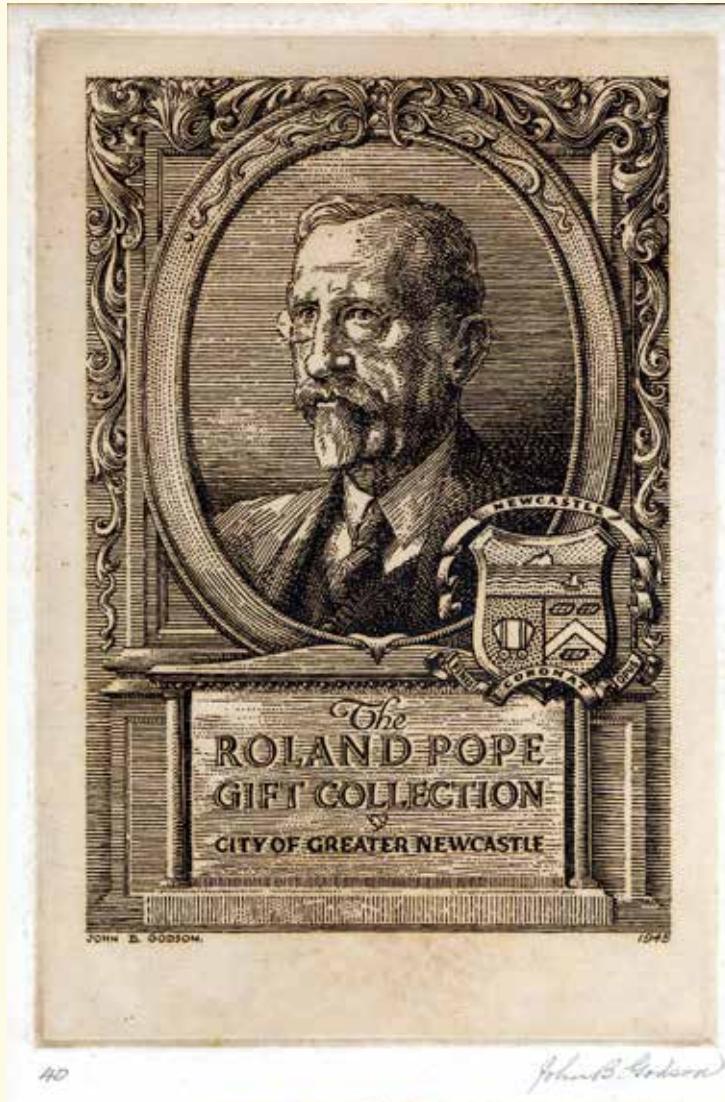
In 2015, Newcastle Art Gallery's collection, one of the most important in Australia, has grown exponentially through donations from people all over Australia.

We welcome you to view this partnership exhibition that celebrates the legacy of Dr Roland Pope and the foundation of the city's cultural collections.

We would like to thank the Pope family for contributing to the story of Dr Roland Pope and the curators Sarah Johnson and Sue Ryan for their dedicated work in presenting this important story.

LIZ BURCHAM
CULTURAL DIRECTOR
THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE

SUZIE GATELY
MANAGER LIBRARIES
THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE



John B Godson
Bookplate for Roland Pope Gift Collection 1945

A GIFT TO THE CITY: THE ROLAND POPE COLLECTION

Comprised of art, artifacts and literature from Newcastle Art Gallery and Newcastle Region Library collections, the exhibition celebrates the 70th anniversary of Dr Roland Pope's significant gift to the city. This donation was the catalyst for the building of the War Memorial Cultural Centre and decades of cultural benefaction to the city which continues to this day.

At the announcement of the donation to Newcastle in June 1945, The Chief Librarian of the New South Wales Public Library Mr John Metcalfe said:

*'... it was a tribute to the judgement and generosity of Dr. Pope that he had made the gift to Newcastle, a city with which he had no particular associations and to which he owed no particular debt. What Dr Pope had chosen to do with his collection was perhaps more important than the collection itself.'*¹

Metcalfe, who acted as a broker for Pope in the negotiations of the donation to the city identified that, 'The Pope collection is the best outside Sydney.'² In 1957, five years after Pope's death, the War Memorial Cultural Centre opened, housing the art gallery and library.

Pope's legacy... *'in giving the collection to Newcastle was the thought that a lifetime's collection of treasures would be readily available to the people of the state's second biggest city.'*³

ROLAND POPE - THE MAN

Dr Roland James 'Rowley' Pope was born in Ashfield, Sydney on 18th February 1864, the son of prominent Sydney businessman John Pope. The Pope family moved to Manly where they took up residence at a property called *White End* overlooking picturesque Manly Cove and Sydney Heads.

Roland attended the prestigious Hutchins School in Hobart, Tasmania from 1876 to 1881, before graduating in the early 1880s with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney. In 1886, he moved to Scotland, enrolling in the University of Edinburgh Medical School from which he graduated in 1890 with a Doctorate of Medicine specialising in Ophthalmology. He also became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh).



White End, Manly
scan of postcard from c1905-10
Manly Library Local Studies collection
Image courtesy Manly Library Local Studies

Pope was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (Great Britain), the Royal Society of Arts (London), the Royal Empire Society of New South Wales and a life member of the Royal Society of New South Wales. As an enthusiastic cricketer and golfer, he was a member of both the MCC (Lords) and St Andrews Golf Club. Pope, with his brother Norman, acquired land in Manly, Sydney to establish the Manly Golf Club, where Roland was named club captain in 1904.

Norman went on to become the managing director of the Farmers Department store, one of the most distinguished stores in Sydney. He became a significant figure in Sydney Radio with the station 2BL broadcasting from Farmers Department store.⁴

From 1894-1911 Dr Pope was a surgeon at the Sydney Eye Hospital. Following the end of his tenure at the hospital he travelled regularly with the Australian Cricket team as a medical advisor and was given the endearing nickname 'Doc' by the team.

LITERATURE COLLECTION

The collection of rare and antiquarian books held by Newcastle Region Library reflects the wide-ranging interests of Dr Pope. While some items were deliberately sourced for his collection, many others were current titles from the shelves of the bookshops he frequented in Sydney and Melbourne.

Books were added to his collection from a variety of book stores in London, New York and other cities to which he travelled. These books encompassed



James J Kelly *Australian Test Cricketer position behind wicket* 1905
The Empire's cricketers from original drawings.
Tayler, A. C. & Beldham, George W.
Roland Pope Gift Collection, Newcastle Region Library

his many interests; food and wine, music and ballet, literature, history and travel. Highlighting his sporting interests, there is an impressive range of cricket books covering a period from the 1860s to the 1940s. Golf and tennis titles are amongst such sporting gems.

Birds were a long-time passion of Dr. Pope and the breadth of his library indicated that he was more than an enthusiast. He assembled a magnificent library of natural history titles with an emphasis on ornithology. This is a collection built on knowledge and expertise. Its scope extends across all continents and many famous names in the field. The outstanding collection of Gould's Birds is the jewel in a gift which has many highlights.

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners advocate reported in 1945 that, *'Dr Pope is a man of very Catholic tastes in literature and cannot resist a good book no matter what subject its theme. But no matter what his tastes, Dr Pope is handing on a real literary heritage to Newcastle.'*⁵

ART COLLECTION

Over one hundred works of art are part of Pope's gift to the city. The works are eclectic reflecting the taste of an astute collector of art, who purchased works by some of Australia's most eminent artists of the time. The most recognisable work in the collection is Russell Drysdale's *The crow trap* 1941 purchased from Macquarie Galleries, Sydney in 1942.

Pope was a regular client of Macquarie Galleries in the 1930s-1940s, sometimes purchasing works of art on a weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis⁶. His choice of works reflected the diverse stable of artists that Macquarie represented. These included works by such artists as Jean Bellette, Ethel Carrick Fox, Elioth Gruner, Sali Herman, Hans Heysen, Sydney Long, Max Meldrum, Thea Proctor,



John Gould *Ramphastos dicolorus* (red breasted toucan)
A monograph of the Ramphastidae, or, family of Toucans
London : Published by the author, c1834.
Roland Pope Gift Collection, Newcastle Region Library

Alison Rehfish, David Strachan, Lloyd Rees, Arthur Streeton and Roland Wakelin - some of the key artists in the Newcastle Art Gallery collection today.



Arthur Streeton *Barrenjoey* 1926 oil on wood 21.4 x 69.4cm Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945 Newcastle Art Gallery collection

Macquarie Galleries was located at *Strathkyle*, 19 Bligh Street Sydney and one of the first commercial galleries in Sydney. Established by John Henry Young and Basil Burdett in 1925 it represented and championed the careers of some of Australia's most significant artists and a rising generation of first wave modernists.

Their client base included some of Australia's wealthiest families such as the Murdoch's and Fairfax's. Fellow arts benefactor Howard Hinton (whose generous benefaction established the New England Art Museum collection) was also a regular client.⁷



'Pope collection presented' in *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Saturday 23 March 1946, p5

Pope's contribution through the donation to Newcastle was recognised by the arts sector in Sydney. In August 1945 Pope was awarded the Society of Art Medal, alongside artist Vida Lahey for '*distinguished services to Australian art*'.⁸

ARRIVAL OF THE COLLECTION

The donation of art and literature was delivered in stages to Newcastle with the first consignment arriving on Friday 15 March 1946. The consignment was '*Offered as a loan, [as] the collection will be an outright gift when Newcastle gives full effect to the Library Act. It is required that a suitable building to house the collection be commenced within reasonable time.*'⁹ Pope was present for the presentation ceremony on

Friday 22 March 1946 at the School of Arts Building on Wolfe street in the Newcastle CBD, where the art collection was initially housed. A reading room was established for the books for public viewing during business hours.

Pope passed away in July 1952 and sadly never got to see the final building that would house his significant donation. In tribute, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Alderman Armstrong, stated:

*'...the city will always be in his debt because of his exceptional generosity...Dr Pope had no ties in Newcastle and was moved only by a public spiritedness and his awareness that it was inappropriate for a city of this size to be without a library and art gallery.'*¹⁰

Seventy years on from this defining act of generosity,

the City of Newcastle has cultivated an ongoing legacy of benefaction and collection of important cultural artefacts that stem from Dr Roland Pope's historic gift in 1945. It could be said that *Vivit Post Funera Virtus* - the motto of The Hutchins School, Hobart underpins Pope's gift to the city - translated as '*Character Lives After Death*'.

SARAH JOHNSON
CURATOR
NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY

SUE RYAN
LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN
NEWCASTLE REGION LIBRARY

¹'Art collection for Newcastle', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 3 July 1945, p6.

²'First of Pope collection here to-day' in *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Friday 15 March 1946, p2.

³'Donor of Pope collection distinguished Australian' in *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Thursday 5 July 1945, p2.

⁴Terry Metherell, *Manly Historical Society archive*, April 2004.

⁵'Pope collection on show in Sydney, then on for Newcastle' in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Tuesday 26 June 1945, p2.

⁶Financial ledgers and sales books 1930s-1950s, *Macquarie Galleries Archive*, located at The Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archive, Art Gallery of NSW.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸'Society of artists medal', in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday 20 August 1945, p5.

⁹Mr John Metcalfe, Principle Librarian - Public Library of NSW, Opening address at the Roland Pope exhibition, Art Gallery, Department of Education Sydney- July 2 1945, in *Official catalogue issued by Greater Newcastle Council on the occasion of the opening of the first public library for Newcastle and exhibition of The Roland Pope Art collection and Library*, p31.

¹⁰'Dr Pope Dies in Sydney', in the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 29 July 1952, p2.



Clockwise from left:

Dance Illustration

The Russian ballet

Johnson, Alfred E. & Bull, Rene. 1913.

Roland Pope Gift Collection, Newcastle Region Library

Illustration of Petrouchka

The Russian ballet

Johnson, Alfred E. & Bull, Rene. 1913.

Roland Pope Gift Collection, Newcastle Region Library

Thea Proctor

The rose 1927

hand-coloured woodcut on rice paper

22.2 x 21.0cm

Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945

Newcastle Art Gallery collection

© Art Galley of New South Wales



Hans Heysen
The white gum 1914
watercolour on paper mounted on cardboard
31.5 x 38.2cm
Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945
Newcastle Art Gallery collection
© Hans Heysen/Licensed by Viscopy, 2015



Will Ashton
On the Seine, Paris 1927
oil on canvas board
36.0 x 44.4cm
Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945
Newcastle Art Gallery collection
© Art Gallery of New South Wales



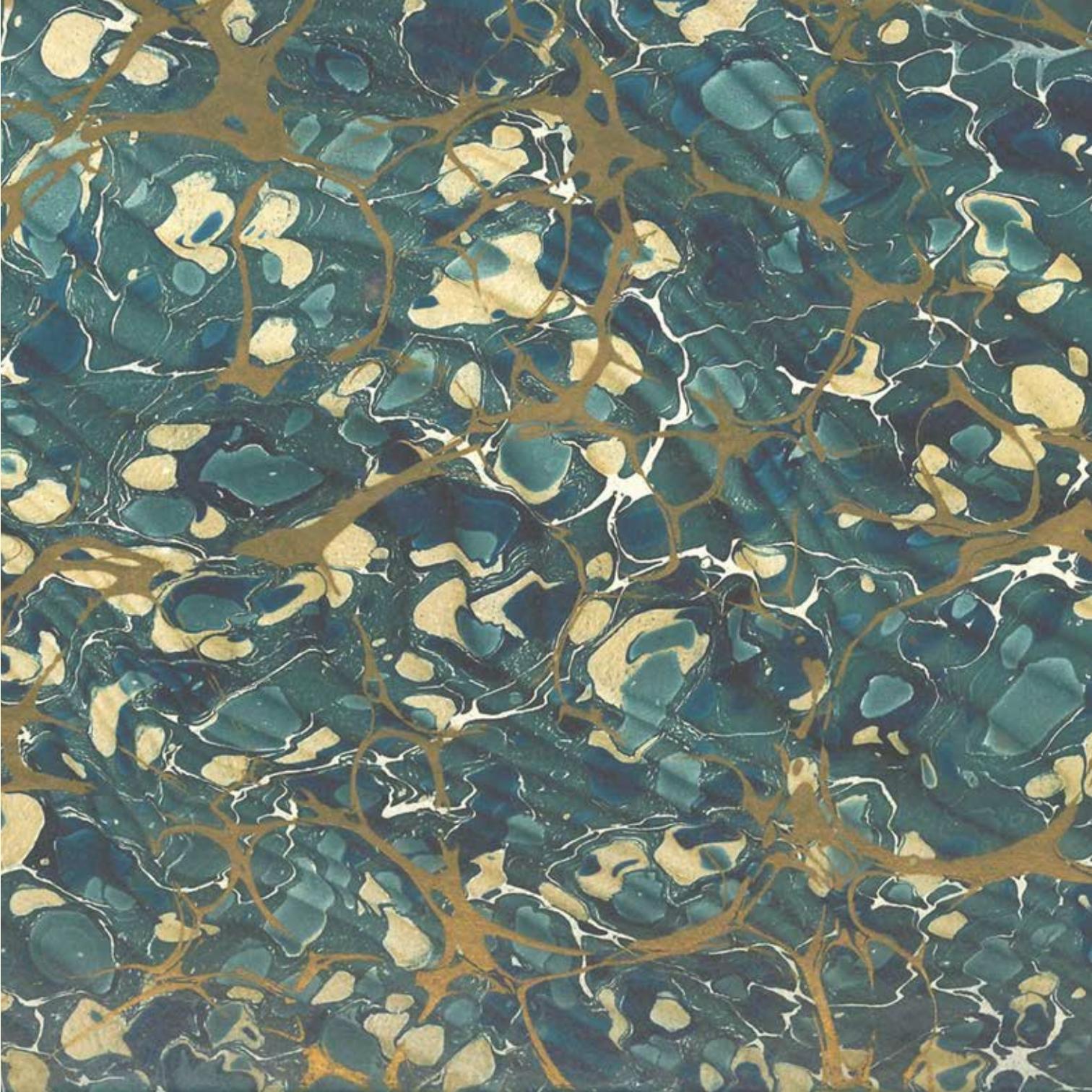
Sali Herman
The little bay 1937-8
oil on canvas
51.7 x 72.7cm
Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945
Newcastle Art Gallery collection
© Sali Herman/Licensed by Viscopy, 2015

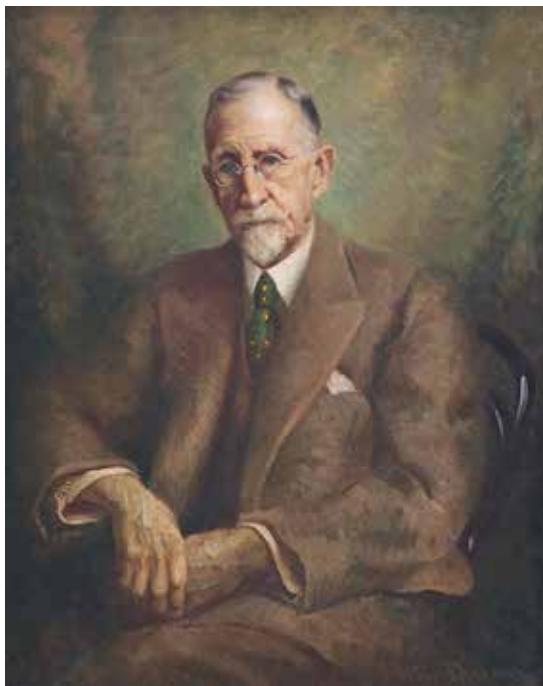


Lloyd Rees
Spring at Hunter's Hill 1937
oil on canvas board
49.3 x 59.5cm
Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945
Newcastle Art Gallery collection



Russell Drysdale
The crow trap 1941
oil on fibro-cement panel
38.7 x 59.0cm
Gift of Dr Roland Pope 1945
Newcastle Art Gallery collection





Cover image:

*Dr Roland Pope - Australian Cricket Team Tour of
England, 1926*

Sydney Smith Collection

Image courtesy State Library of NSW

Back cover image:

Jerrold Nathan

Portrait of Dr Roland Pope 1944

oil on canvas

90.0 x 69.9cm

Purchased 1946

Newcastle Art Gallery collection

Inside front/back cover (marbling detail):

The Ibis - A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology

Salvin, Osbert & Selater, Phillip Lutley (eds)

Vol III, Fourth series

British Ornithology Union, London, 1879

Roland Pope Gift Collection

Newcastle Region Library

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