

A Taste of Progress: The Temperance Movement and its influence on Food and Drink and the Urban Landscape at the time of the International Exhibitions in the Australian Colonies

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In May 1851, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (RSA) invited the world to visit the Great Exhibition of the 'Industry of all Nations', an initiative of British industrial designer Henry Cole and presided over by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. The huge exhibition, the first in a series of international expositions and fairs that became very much part of the cultural scene in the latter half of the nineteenth century, brought together a collection of industrial innovations, raw materials, and arts and crafts from all over the world. By propagating cultural modernity and industrial and societal progress, world exhibitions played an important part in the definition and development of the modern consumer and urbanised society. Australia (then comprised of six British colonies) joined the fray and staged eight International Exhibitions three of which were significant—Sydney in 1879 and two in Melbourne in 1880 and 1888. The exhibitions were attended by people from all over the world as well as the colonies.

Historical background

In January 1788, the British arrived on Australian shores to establish a penal settlement, marking the beginnings of transportation and later migration of people to Australia. At the same time, the British brought an ecological revolution. A microcosm of the agriculture of Britain and its Empire was brought to Australia which ultimately refashioned the New World of Australia into a botanical image closer to that of the Old World of Europe. In doing so, the traditional hunting and gathering grounds of its first nation people were progressively overtaken (Gascoigne 72-73). In less than 100 years since European settlement, albeit at great cost to the original inhabitants, the British colonies were prosperous with bustling global cities, a thriving pastoral industry and a burgeoning manufacturing sector, and were keen to show the rest of the world how successful British transplantation in the southern hemisphere had been. Indeed, "the rapid progress of Australasia" was "one of the marvels of modern times," stated the Victorian Exhibition Commissioners. (Lovell Chen Appendix 32). The Exhibitions were also planned in the hope that they would contribute further to the prosperity and advancement of the colonies through trade negotiations.



Figure 1: The Crystal Palace London 1854. Philip Henry Delamotte (1821-1889). Image source: Smithsonian Libraries.

International Exhibitions

Before the Australian colonies federated in 1901, eight International Exhibitions were held between 1879 and 1899—Sydney, Melbourne (two), Adelaide, Launceston, Hobart, Brisbane and Coolgardie - but only three exhibitions will be discussed, the most significant ones: Sydney 1879, and Melbourne 1880 and 1888. Nevertheless, each was a great local event, in a specially constructed building, uniting the spectacle of primary products and commercial manufactures with the popular attractions of sideshows, grand musical events and magnificent displays of exhibits, statues, sculptures, artifacts, trophies and art collections brought together on a scale hereto unknown in Australia. It was a chance for visitors to visually experience the unprecedented changes taking place in society, with emphasis on work, on ingenuity, innovation, and science (Lovell Chen Appendix 30).

The Sydney International Exhibition held between September 1879 and April 1880 was not only Australia's first but the first World Exhibition in the Southern Hemisphere, far from the cultural and commercial centres of Europe. Thirty-four countries including England, United States, Belgium, Japan, Italy, Germany, Holland, India, to name a few, and the six Australian colonies, responded to the government's invitation and sent exhibits displaying their countries' wares. It was the first blockbuster exhibition seen in the colony and 1,045,898 people came from all over the country as well as overseas, to see exhibits from the great nations of the world (Baker). The New South Wales Executive Commissioner Patrick Jennings stated, "considering the sparse population of the colony, the wide area over which the people were dispersed, and the great distance from the other colonies and from the whole world, the attendance was certainly remarkable" (Orr 140). The Melbourne Exhibitions of 1880 and 1888 attracted a total of 1.3 million visitors and two million respectively, nearly double the population of Victoria.

The purpose-built exhibition buildings in Sydney and Melbourne were designed to clearly express the ideals developed at the Crystal Palace in London (1851) with their cruciform plan and dome. Moreover, throughout the world, exhibition buildings were placed within gardens. The common view was that these “palaces of industry” would be seen and function within palatial garden settings (Lovell Chen 13). The word ‘Palace’ persisted throughout the Exhibition era (1851-1915). Sydney’s exhibition building, named the ‘Garden Palace’ by New South Wales Premier Sir Henry Parkes and designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet, was located in the (now) Royal Botanic Gardens. Up to 2000 men worked on site night and day, using electric light for the first time, to complete the building in just eight months. Unfortunately, the Garden Palace burnt to the ground two years after the exhibition closed. Melbourne’s exhibition building, designed primarily in the Italian Renaissance style by architect Joseph Reed, was and still is located in the Gardenesque style Carlton Gardens. It was constructed in 1879-80 to house Melbourne’s first International Exhibition held in 1880. Thanks to the installation of electric lighting, Melbourne’s second exhibition held in 1888 offered night-time viewing, the first in the world to do so. Electricity was at that time one of the marvellous, new technological inventions. The electrical installation, the largest installation of electric arc lighting in the world, and the generating plants, were the most popular features of the 1888 Melbourne exhibition, and a great drawcard (Lovell Chen 33-34). The Melbourne exhibition building is the only major extant nineteenth century exhibition building in Australia and one of only a handful remaining world-wide.

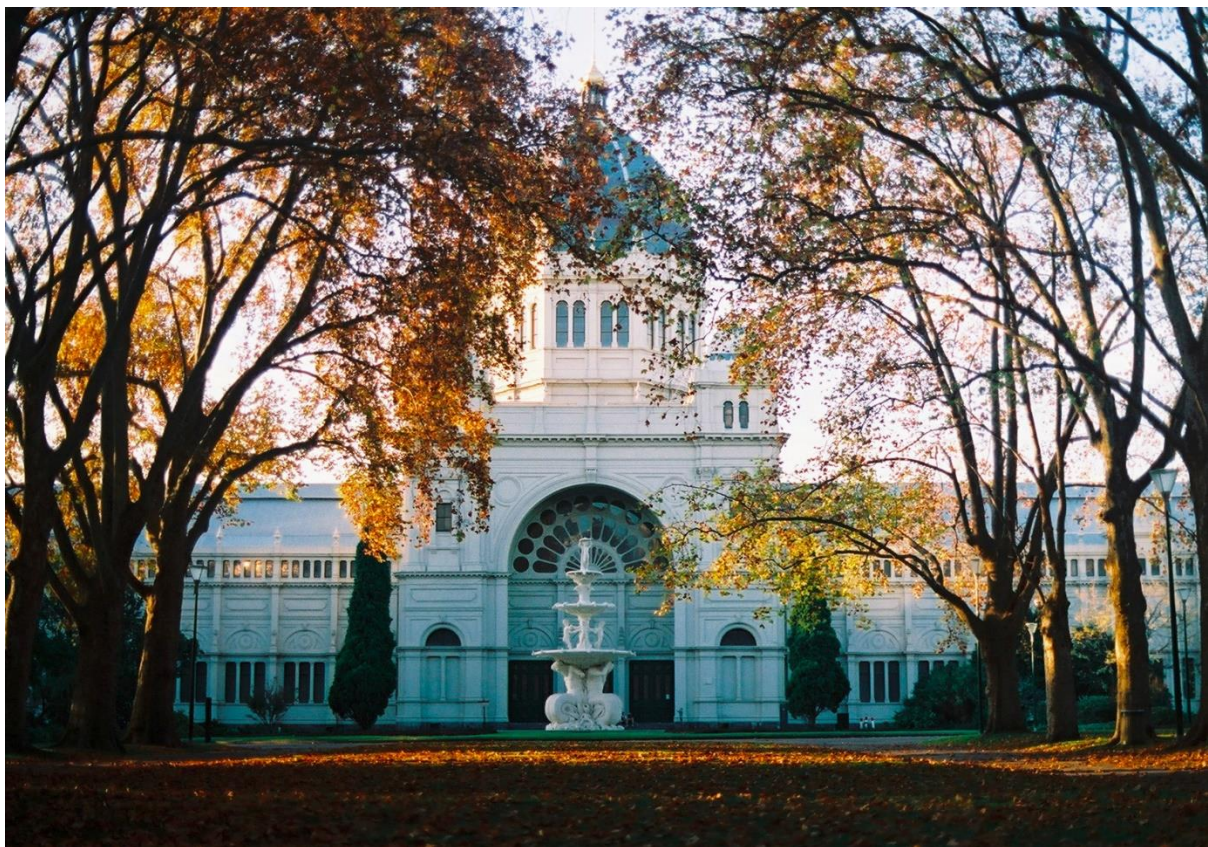


Figure 2: The Royal Exhibition Building in the Gardenesque style Carlton Gardens, Melbourne. Image source: Toby Ord, 17 May 2003.

The Temperance Movement and the Exhibit of Wine

The Exhibitions set out to visually chart not only material progress, within a world context, but also moral progress (Lovell Chen Appendix 32). The Australian exhibitions occurred at a time when the total suppression of the alcohol trade was seriously debated in Australia. The movement, once a worldwide lobby group, has almost completely vanished from view, yet for well over a century—from 1830 to the outbreak of the Second World War—the control or even total abolition of the liquor trade was a major political issue: one that split the country, brought thousands onto the streets in demonstrations, and influenced the outcome of elections, recounts Ross Fitzgerald (145). Between 1911 and 1925 referenda to either limit or prohibit the sale of alcohol were held in most States. While moves to bring about total abolition failed, almost one in three Australian voters expressed their support for prohibition of alcohol in their State. Canberra became known as the “dry capital” due to its Prohibition law from 1910 to 1928. However, the law only prevented the sale of liquor, not its transportation and consumption. Today, the temperance movement’s platform has largely been forgotten by the general public, but the 1870s and ‘80s were, according to Fitzgerald, “a golden era of temperance pledges” (140, 145).

The London 1851 International Exhibition was a ‘dry’ event, where the refreshments on offer were non-alcoholic, anxious as the organisers were that the lower classes in particular, on such a special day out, “would get out of hand” (Spours 9). Not so for the Exhibitions in Australia. The 1867 ill-fated free banquet, which included a 500-gallon (2270-litre) “wine fountain”, donated by Melbourne doctor Louis Smith for the citizens of the colony in honour of Prince Alfred (Queen Victoria’s second son), resulted in a bacchanalian free-for-all (*The Age*, 29 November 1867, 4). Nonetheless, Australia’s promising wine industry was to be encouraged and accommodated at all cost. Besides, wine, it was argued, was conducive to temperance. However, the authorities thought it prudent to engage 100 men to oversee the Sydney Exhibition and to control any unruly behaviour.

Once seen as dietary supplements, wine, beer, and stout were initially acceptable to temperance advocates. Wine has also been consumed as a sacrament, a toast, and a symbol of sophistication. It was spirits, especially gin, that were seen as the demon drink. According to eighteenth-century physician John Coakley Lettsom’s “moral and physical thermometer”, specified in his *Hints Designed to Promote Beneficence, Temperance, and Medical Science* (1797), a “small beer” had all the virtues of milk and water, wine was acceptable; punch and spirits were not. Lettsom was a proponent of true temperance, not total abstinence. Intemperance, however, according to the thermometer, can lead to various vices, diseases and punishments including being sent to “Botany Bay” (as Australia, a penal settlement, was known then), which was only one step away from the gallows (Hunwick 140).

France and other suppliers and become a major exporter of wine and spirits to the “mother country”, a hopeful source of national prosperity (*Official Record* 863).¹

And what better way to display your wares and wines and encourage trade than in the spectacular setting of an International Exhibition? After all, the colonies were producing a surprisingly vast array of award-winning wines as well as spirits and ales— Riesling, Hermitage, Shiraz, Verdot, Lambrusco, Verdelho, Cabinet, Madeira, Champagne, white/red Shiraz, Pinot, Malbec, Chasselas, Tokay, red/white Hermitage, Sauvignon, Mataro, Gamay, Sherry, Grenache, Camille Reau, Ugni Blanc, Pedro Ximenes, Tolle Blanc, Sauterne, Muscatel, malt whisky, ales and stout, and porter. However, displays of gin were frowned upon by temperance advocates. From New South Wales there were 42 exhibitors; from Victoria, 30, and from South Australia, 18 (*Official Record* 863-64, 890-91). The *South Australian Chronicle* reported:

Entering the basement at the southern end, we find that New South Wales comes out strong in wines. Here are pyramids of bottles containing champagne, pineau, madeira, and claret, shown by P. Terrier, Hunter River. Taylor’s quinetum [sic] wine and extract of sarsaparilla, Wyndham’s Australian wines, Wilkinson’s Coolalta, and an immense variety of other wines, which are being unpacked, and for which the stands are ready (1 November 1879, 2)

Exhibitors of wine had greatly increased for the 1880-81 Melbourne Exhibition. According to Melbourne’s 1880-81 *Official Record*, there were 156 different kinds of wines on display and a great number of facilities were given by authorities to the producers of colonial wine in particular. The number of exhibits from all countries included: France 256; Germany 209; Italy 195; Austria 63; Portugal 31; Spain 17; Victoria 357; New South Wales 159; South Australia 149; New Zealand 33, Western Australia 13; South Africa 11; California 9—total 1502. The jurors commented that the winegrowers of the Australasian colonies should be congratulated on the generally high standard of excellence their products had attained, when brought into comparison with those of the old world, where the industry counted its history by centuries, whereas in Australia it was barely counted by decades. They concluded that Australia would one day take its rightful place amongst the first wine-producing countries of the world (165-68).

According to *Melbourne’s Centennial Exhibition Official Record* (1888), after 100 years of European settlement the Australian colonies had 25,000 acres (10117.141hectares) of vines under cultivation producing 2, 600,00 gallons (118198.34 litres) of wine (119). Although Alfred Deakin (future Prime Minister of Australia), moved a resolution in 1881 at “The Victorian Alliance” stating that “the traffic in intoxicating liquors for consumption as beverages is detrimental to the best interests of society, and retards its progress, physically, morally and religiously” (*The Argus*, 24 August, 1881, 7), the wine industry was nevertheless well represented at the Centennial Exhibition in 1888. Deakin, now Chief Secretary of the Centennial Exhibition, along with the Commissioners, permitted the exhibit and sale of wine, spirits, ale, porter, cider, perry and other spiritous and fermented liquors (*Official Record* 9). Although fewer than at Melbourne’s 1880-81 Exhibition, there were over 800 exhibits of wines representing a vast array of grape types which were divided into foreign and Australian wines. France 128; Austria Hungary 50; Germany 31; Portugal 12; Italy 21; America 5; Italy 7; Spain 4; Switzerland 3; Victoria 436; New South Wales 80; South Australia 82; Queensland 20; New Zealand 9; Tasmania 2: total 870 (*Official Record* 304). To compete

¹ The great phylloxera epidemic of 1875-87 destroyed one third of French vineyards and had similar consequences in the rest of Europe. It appeared in New south Wales about 1884, though it had been noted in South Australia as early as 1875 (Young, 174).

with the great bulk of Continental wines which were sold in Europe, a prize valued at 50 guineas (around \$16,000 in today's money) was offered by Mr Peter Bond Burgoyne of London for the best sample of a light wine grown in the Australian colonies and produced at a reasonable price. The prize was introduced to popularise Australian wines in the hope of increasing sales in the United Kingdom. Although the jurors acknowledged the superiority of French wines, Mr Benno Seppelt from South Australia was the winner (*Official Record* 316-17). However, Victoria took out most of the gold medals for wine. The jurors noted that the Australian wines had greatly improved since the 1880-81 International exhibition.



Figure 4: Pyramids of Australian Wines and Whiskey on display including Seppelts and Crowder & Co. Image: State Library of South Australia.

Food and Drink at the Exhibitions

The temperance movement very much made its presence felt at the Sydney Exhibition. The biggest day's attendance came on Foundation Day (now Australia Day), 26 January 1880, when 27,500 visitors celebrated the birth of the colony with a Temperance Holiday. For the cost of a five-shilling entrance fee (later reduced to one shilling to make entrance to the exhibition more affordable to the working classes), attendees could listen to a choir of a

thousand children clad in white sing temperance and patriotic songs such as *Rule Britannia* and *Advance Australia Fair* (Young 208).



Figure 5: The Sydney International Exhibition, Garden Palace, Sydney, drawn by J. T. Richardson. Ink & watercolour. Showing Compagnoni and Co. refreshment pavilion (right hand side behind row of terraces). Cripps's refreshment pavilion is the small building to the right of the arched street entry-way; and other refreshment and out buildings. Image source Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

The many spectators and participants required food and drink while enjoying the festivities and exhibits. Sydneysiders experienced for the first-time dining in public on a grand scale. Eating out was rare. The *Illustrated Sydney News* revealed that not only were the classes dining together at the exhibition but also the sexes (1 November 1879, 4, 7). Stylish cafes both licensed and unlicensed located under the dome of the Palace were THE places to gather and be seen. According to the *Official Record of the Sydney International Exhibition 1879*, whether addressed to a temperance advocate or not, “meet me under the dome” became a common expression in Sydney during the Exhibition (lxxxiii).

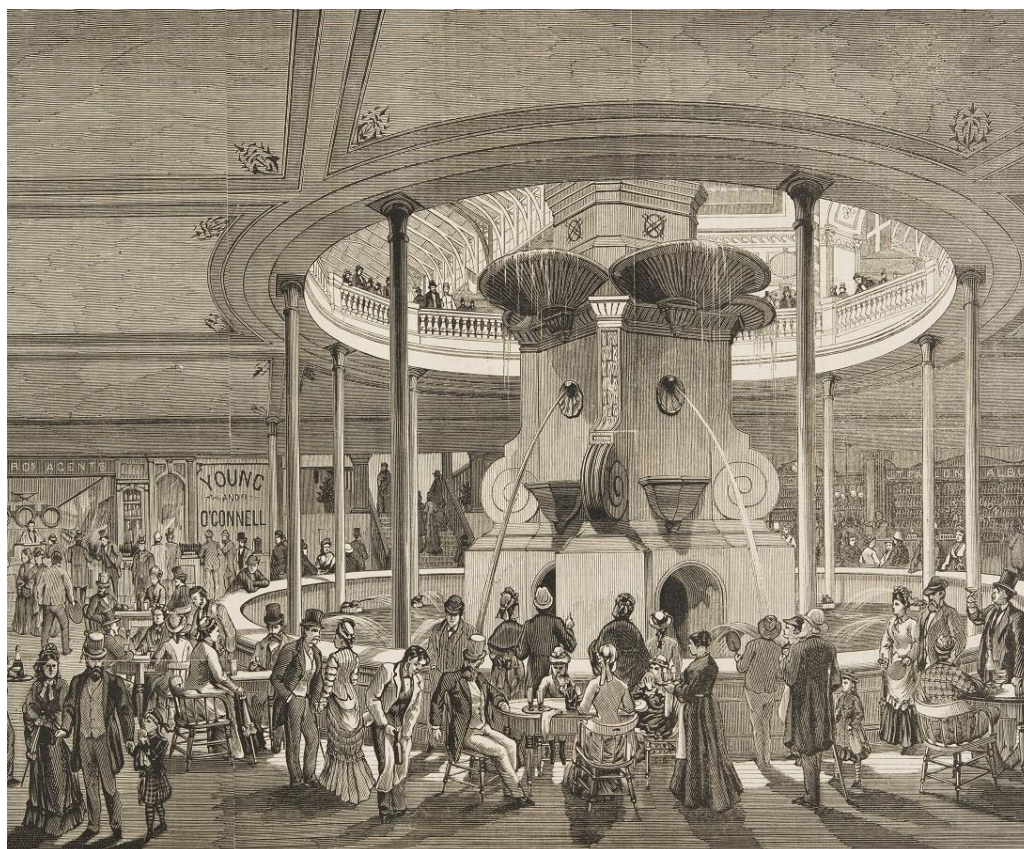


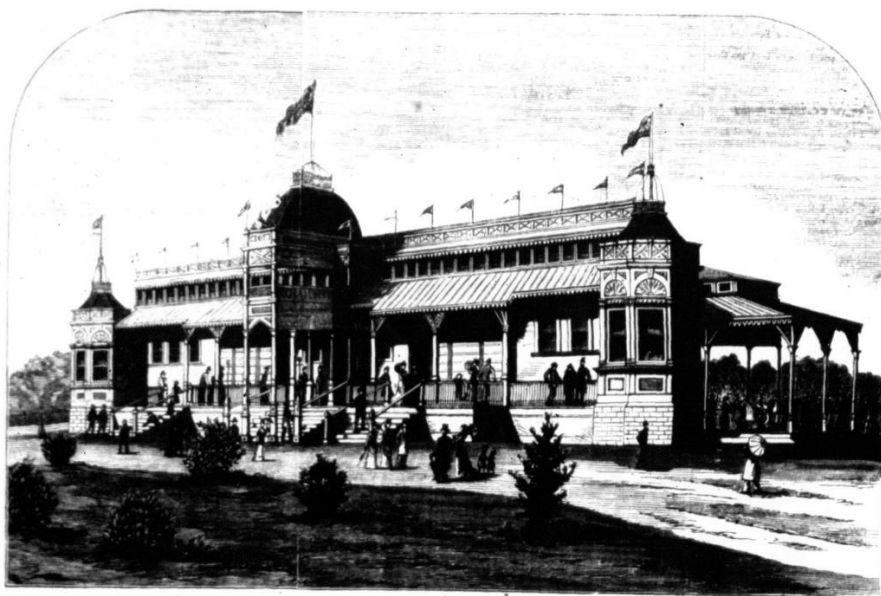
Figure 6: “Under the Dome and Promenade”. Image source: *Illustrated Sydney News* 1 November, 1879, 4. Both temperance and licenced cafes stood side by side.

Although Sydney had begun to embrace the new fashion of upper-class dining in restaurants serving French and British cuisine, respectable families tended to eat at home; or gentlemen dined at the then-numerous men’s clubs, bastions of retreat for business and professional men. Clerks, office workers, and other wage earners of limited means tended to eat a ‘counter’ lunch of sandwiches, cold meats, a hot pie, or cheese and bread, at pubs and small hotels. The less respectable men ate from street vendors or at public houses, oyster saloons and chophouses that served a sliced round of boiled or roast beef or mutton accompanied by bread and a glass of beer or porter (Hunwick 107-20, 155). Women entertained at home or visited a tea house. Some visitors to the Exhibition, however, preferred to bring their own food and many enjoyed unpretentious picnics in the Exhibition grounds, while others chose, much to the disgust of a fastidious reporter for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, to eat their greasy packed sandwiches of bacon, cheese, butter and sardines while viewing the exhibits (30 September 1879, 6).

Visitors to Sydney’s Exhibition were treated to food and drinks never tasted before. In June 1879, although not comprehensive, readers of the *Sydney Mail* were given a taste of what to expect as far as places of refreshment were concerned, such as the Fresh Food and Ice Company’s stall which planned to dispense ice creams and “fresh country milk” (Saturday 21 June 1879, 990). According to the *Official Record* there were ten restaurants and other outlets

established on the Palace grounds to satiate visitors (cxxi).² Picturesque stalls and cafés such as the Swedish Café served tea, coffee and other non-intoxicating drinks—soda water, lemonade, ginger ale and tonic water and other aerated waters—which could also be had at the Floral Café owned by the Sydney Coffee Palace Hotel Company, (*SMH*, 27 January 1880, 1). Messrs. Young and Connell’s bar located under the dome of the Palace also sold non-alcoholic beverages, said the *Illustrated Sydney News* (1 November 1879, 4, 7).

Licensed refreshments outlets included Emerson’s Refreshment Pavilion, Compagnoni & Co.’s Refreshment Pavilion, and Cripps’s Refreshment Garden Palace. Emerson’s served “fish, flesh, fowl and game, of all descriptions, fresh and plenty, served up in a style to suit the most fastidious”, as well as wine, ale, spirits and porter. Cripps’s Refreshment Pavilion replete with a “large patent silver grill”, featured a main room for 720 persons to dine *à la carte*. For the budget conscious, there was a separate “set-dinner hall”, as well as other “well-designed tea and refreshment rooms, cloak and retiring rooms” (*Australian Town and Country Journal*, 23 August 1879, 348). Campagnoni’s was the most impressive of the Exhibition’s privately constructed refreshment rooms and apparently the best provisioned. A wood and iron construction, it housed private dining rooms, two retiring rooms for the ladies, three large bars, buffets and cellars stocked with all kinds of wines, beers, spirits and liqueurs. “Visitors may enjoy themselves here at leisure, regaling themselves with the choicest viands prepared by professional masters of the cuisine, and served in the most tempting and *recherché* style. No expense has been spared to make this a first-class establishment in every respect”, wrote the *Illustrated Guide*. Other food outlets at the exhibition included an Oyster Saloon, pop-corn stand, and a fruit and confectionery saloon. Located behind the Oyster Saloon was an American refreshment cottage (134,136).



MESSES COMPAGNONI AND CO.'S REFRESHMENT PAVILION, EXHIBITION BUILDING.

Figure 7: Messes Compagnoni and Co.’s refreshment Pavilion, Exhibition Building. Image source: National Library of Australia.

² The exact number of food outlets is unknown as the number of both licensed and unlicensed premises increased over the course of the Exhibition. See also “Refreshments at the Garden Palace”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1880, 3. The number of licensed premises was roughly 13.

There was also an Austrian and Hungarian wine and beer tasting hall in the grounds that served the most popular on-tap Dreher's beer. The German pavilion served alcoholic refreshment with "many kinds of drinks previously unknown [in the colony] even by name ... that might excite the appetite of even a teetotaler", reported the *Sydney Morning Herald*—these included German beer, lager beer, and wines and spirits in great variety (Wednesday 15 October 1879, 3). Australian wines including labels still known today from winemakers such as Wyndham, Lindemans, Penfolds, Hardy's and Seppelts could be bought by the glass from various outlets and Cripps advertised wine at sixpence a glass. Pale, strong and stock ales and stout bottled and on-tap tempted the beer drinkers.



Figure 8: Refreshment stands including NSW Fresh Food & Ice Refreshment stand (centre) and the German pavilion (right) at the Sydney International exhibition grounds. Image source: Department of Education NSW.

Catering to the 1.3 million people who visited Melbourne's first major International Exhibition in 1880 appears to have been more haphazard than in the Sydney Exhibition. A month before the Exhibition was due to open no catering arrangements had been put in place and no specially constructed buildings were erected in the grounds, reported *The Argus* (1 September 1880, 6). While the Exhibition's *Official Record* published in 1882 makes reference to several official dinners prior to opening, catering arrangements at the Exhibition do not rate a mention (lviii). However, unlike in the case of the Sydney Exhibition, there is some record of what visitors thought of the food that was available, especially the temperance catering. The visitors' register for the Exhibition indicates that criticism of the catering was

intense, with a visitor from Spain summing it up thus: “Catering in Temperance dept [sic] is simply abominable. Sandwiches like boards, coffee like mud and tea like slops. Nuff sed [enough said].” His view was shared by others using words like “scandalous” and “execrable”— The caterer, Mr Sargent’s, contract was later cancelled (McCormack 40-41).

Unlike in Melbourne’s first Exhibition, a Refreshment Committee was established well in advance of the 1888 Centennial Exhibition, and according to its *Official Record* visitors were well supplied with dining rooms of various degrees of style, both licensed and unlicensed, erected in temporary annexes and in the grounds (162-74). The ground plan of the Exhibition reveals that catering facilities located in the gardens situated temperance dining establishments and bars shoulder to shoulder with licensed dining rooms and refreshment bars. Whether temperance advocates were happy with this arrangement is unknown. Furthermore, the Exhibition was even better supplied than the 1880 Exhibition with wine and beer tasting outlets. It was considered that the exhibition of wine in a bottle, or beer in a cask, afforded very little insight into the taste or quality of its contents, and that the only way to bring the wines produced in the colonies before the visitors to the Exhibition was to have them on sale, both in the wine-bars and refreshment rooms. A suite of national bars in the cellar was established including bars for the sale of exclusively Australian wines which proved very popular amongst patrons.

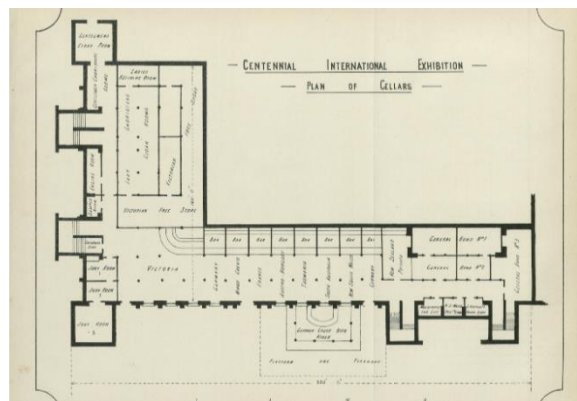


Figure 9: Centennial Exhibition -Plan of wine tasting outlets in the Cellar. Image: *Official Record*, 305.



Figure 10. German Beer Hall, Centennial International Exhibition, 1888. Location seen in the above image. Image: State Library of Victoria. H82.166/2.

Coffee Palaces

The temperance movement had a profound influence on how people were accommodated and fed during the International Exhibitions. The word ‘Palace’ persisted throughout the Exhibition era period not only for the exhibition buildings, but for another kind of Palace, that is, the Coffee Palace. Visitors to the Exhibitions both from overseas and the colonies required accommodation and Coffee Palaces provided an alternative accommodation to pubs or licenced hotels.

Travel began to increase with the advancement of the inter-colonial railway, particularly between Melbourne and Sydney, which meant more demand for accommodation. Accordingly, a new generation of grand hotels began to appear throughout the 1870s and ‘80s. In addition, as land values rose, buildings also needed to rise. Mechanical passenger-lifts (first demonstrated at the Sydney Exhibition) began to be installed in buildings. Buildings rose upwards to take advantage of the new invention. Residential hotels seven, eight, or even nine storeys high, reared up to dominate the skylines of both Sydney and Melbourne (Freeland 118-19).

As the International Exhibitions increasingly loomed in the public consciousness, through newspaper reports, rising buildings, infrastructure projects and the arrival of ships from all over the world carrying the international exhibits and visitors, wealthy temperance advocates hoping to capitalise on the influx of visitors to the exhibitions built elegant Coffee Palaces to provide alternative accommodation to licensed premises. These edifices embodied the ideas, spirit and power relations of late-nineteenth-century Australia. Moreover, they intended to reflect the ethics of a ‘good’ society upholding traditional family values, as well as of course to make a profit.

In Britain, the temperance movement revived the establishment of coffee houses in the early 1870s to provide an alternative to the “gin taverns” that, according to James Clarke, had become so attractive to the working classes of the Industrial Age (5).



Figure 11: “Gin Lane” by William Hogarth (1697–1764,) 1751. Image source: Getty Images.

Although tea has long been considered the beverage of sobriety, it was coffee, introduced to Europe in the mid seventeenth century, that came to be regarded as the very antithesis of alcohol. Known as the “intellectual beverage”, coffee was said to fuel the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. Coffee houses, describes Tom Standage, were established to share ideas: “they functioned as the internet of the Age of Reason”. Coffee houses became the centre of urban life in Europe, and in Britain were known as “penny universities”, a penny then being the price of a cup of coffee (136, 157, 158).

Australia also established coffee houses, but on a grander scale both in number and form. The latter half of the nineteenth century was a unique time in Australia’s architectural development, as the economic boom fuelled by the 1850s gold rush, and the demand for ostentatious display that gathered momentum during the following years, afforded the use of richly ornamental high Victorian architecture and resulted in very majestic structures; hence the term “palace” (Freeland 121).

These multi storeyed buildings were massive and outwardly dignified, and inside elegant and spacious. Presented as upholding family values and discouraging drunkenness, coffee palaces were found in every capital city as well as regional areas of Australia. Moreover, coffee palaces were much more than ordinary hotels—they were often multi-purpose or mixed-use buildings that included a large number of rooms for accommodation, as well as ballrooms and other leisure facilities to attract people away from the pubs. These included smoking rooms, chess and billiard rooms, and rooms where people could read books, periodicals and all the local and national papers for free.

In Sydney, The Sydney Coffee Palace Hotel Company Limited was formed in 1878 to operate and manage a number of coffee palaces constructed during the 1870s in readiness for the 1879 Exhibition (Sydney Coffee Palace Hotel, 7). The intention was to encourage visitors, businessmen, artists, writers, engineers and scientists attending the Exhibition to be accommodated at palaces as well as to eat, drink (non-alcoholic), socialise, and do business. The *Australian Town and Country Journal* described coffee palaces such as the Coffee Palace, No. 2 as “gastronomic temples” where “cheap and wholesome food”, could be had in the form of regular meals for the cost of a shilling, or occasional refreshments, cooked in kitchens with the latest in culinary appliances. These included Pullinger’s ranges, copper stew pans, steam carving tables and steam stock pots (17 July 1880, 120-21).

To attract people to stay and eat at coffee palaces, guidebooks pertaining to a particular coffee palace were distributed to visitors to the Exhibition at places of disembarkation such as railway stations and ports. The Johnson’s Temperance Coffee Palace located in York Street, Sydney, produced a pocket-sized practical guide for visitors and potential investors and businessmen attending the Exhibition. Food appears to be the main enticement, with more than half the booklet devoted to epicurean delights. The palace guide reveals there were several dining rooms for patrons—on the ground floor there were separate dining rooms for families to dine together, men and women together, women only, and another dining area on the first floor for men only. There was also a vegetarian dining room (9-17). As writer Edgar Crook reveals in *Vegetarianism in Australia*, there was a belief amongst temperance advocates that meat promoted alcoholism and that a vegetarian diet was a cure (12, 27). However, vegetarianism did not make a big impact on the nation’s diet in the nineteenth century. Meat was plentiful and cheap, and was considered the staple of Australian life. Whether rich or poor, households generally enjoyed meat three times a day.

The Johnson’s guide book revealed that the restaurants were open from 6 a.m. to 12 midnight, and for the cost of one-shilling diners could choose from a “Mammoth Bill of Fare from which a daily Bill of Fare will be made up”. It appears from the bill of fare the coffee palace attempted to integrate contemporary British fare with a taste of Australia (both indigenous and naturalised produce) as well as international dishes. The mammoth bill of fare included soups of kangaroo tail and kale à la Danemark [sic] as well the quintessential Victorian turtle soup, to name a few. “Fishes” [sic] are listed as “Murray cots” [sic], whiting, flathead and other native fish are served with various kinds of sauces. Entrées covered steak and kidney pie, mutton pie, mutton calves’ heels pies, sheep’s tongues à la Milanaise [sic], French côtelettes and chops, sheep’s trotters with tomato sauce and many kinds of offal including sheep’s brains, pork chops with Swisse [sic] sauce, pork and beans à la America and suckling pig with apple sauce and stuffing, as well as boiled ox tongue with carrots. Steaks à la Russe were also on offer, as well as Sydney rock oysters served fresh, stewed or curried. There were “Joints” of roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and horseradish and roast lamb with mint sauce. Compotes of stewed fruit, fruit pies, jellies and puddings of

pineapples, rhubarb and other fruits were offered for dessert. For two shillings patrons could dine on poultry. Light refreshments of tea, coffee and Van Houston's cocoa with a hot pie, muffin, roll or pastry could be had for sixpence, and for threepence cold temperance drinks included Exhibition punch, strawberry wine, gooseberry wine and Dr Conquest's golden bitters, to name a few (1-17).

To accommodate visitors to the Exhibitions in Melbourne, coffee palaces were built on an even grander scale. Victoria's abundant goldfields had made its capital the financial and cultural centre of Australasia and the South Pacific, financing ventures in other Australasian colonies and countries in the Pacific. According to John Bailey, Melbourne was the city an entrepreneur went to if he wanted to raise funds, be it a mine in Tasmania or a pastoral empire in Queensland (172). Moreover, the goldfields had attracted mass migration of people from continental Europe, North America and China as well as Britain. By 1881, according to the census, Melbourne's multi-cultural population had reached 66,000. Its wealth and the size of the city led George Sala, an influential London journalist, to dub the city "Marvellous Melbourne" (Lovell Chen 29). Marvellous Melbourne was the city where the grandest of grand operas were performed, the balls and parties were the most lavish and the horse races offered the biggest prizes (Bailey 172). It was wealthy businessmen and entrepreneurs who were behind the establishment of lavish Coffee Palaces in Melbourne.

Much of the success of the coffee palace movement, argues Sally Murdoch, was due to politicians with business interests, such as the one-time Victorian Premier James Munro, who expanded the temperance movement into a fanatical force with extraordinary power. Munro was responsible for building many prestigious temperance hotels including the Victoria (1880) and the Federal Coffee Palace (1888). After establishing the Grand Coffee Palace Company, Munro took over the Grand Hotel (now the Windsor) in 1886 and expanded the hotel to accommodate visitors to the Centenary Exhibition, renaming it the Grand Coffee Palace. By 1888 there were more than fifty coffee palaces in the city of Melbourne alone, and every suburb featured one.



Figure 12: Hotel Windsor 2010, Melbourne. Once the Grand Coffee Palace. Image source: Biatch at en. Wikipedia.

With its opening planned to commemorate the centenary of British settlement and the 1888 International Exhibition, the construction of the Federal Coffee Palace, then one of the largest hotels in Australia, was perhaps the greatest monument to the temperance movement. Designed in the French Renaissance style, the façade was embellished with statues, griffins and Venus in a chariot drawn by four sea-horses, and the building crowned by an iron-framed domed tower. The new passenger elevators first demonstrated at the Sydney Exhibition allowed the building to be seven storeys high. According to the *Federal Coffee Palace Visitor's Guide* published in 1888, bedrooms were on the top five floors that slept four hundred people, while the stately ground and first floors contained majestic dining, lounge, sitting, smoking, writing, and billiard rooms, a café for women and a public restaurant. There were electric service bells, gaslights and kitchens “fitted with the most approved inventions for aiding proficient[sic] in the culinary arts”, which included a meat freezer (first demonstrated at the Sydney Exhibition) and a steamer (16-17). It also had its own ice-plant in the basement (Freeland 120).



Figure 13: The Federal Coffee Palace, 1890. Demolished in 1972. Part of the Shirley Jones collection of Victorian Postcards. Image source: State Library of Victoria.

But were these “gastronomic temples” proficient in the culinary arts? Oscar Comettant (1819-99), a French journalist and composer who served as a juryman at the 1888 Melbourne Exhibition, travelled extensively in Victoria, and recorded his stay in his book *Au pays des kangourous et des mines d'or: étude des moeurs et coutumes australiennes: impressions de voyage (In the Land of Kangaroos and Gold Mines)*, published in Paris, 1890. Comettant, while acknowledging the numerous temperance hotels in Victoria were sumptuously furnished, wrote that they were in reality, “cheap eating houses under a religious veneer” that “offered only water, lemonade, sarsaparilla, and other insipid beverages.” “No one in wine producing countries in Europe would think of opening a temperance hotel”, noted Comettant (214):

But, heavens above!

What dreadful food you get in the cheap boarding houses and temperance hotels and restaurants.... The shilling meals consist of one of those soups that are neither soup nor sauce, a plate of tasteless meat accompanied by some even more tasteless vegetables boiled in saltless water, and a pudding that you swallow while reminding yourself that you must eat to live, not live to eat. That lot is washed down with plain

water, more or less clear, or cooked water, more or less brown, called tea. ... Potatoes were eaten with everything as in England (64-65).

It appears the epicurean delights of temperance catering were not well received either at the Exhibitions nor the coffee palaces.

Conclusion

Food and drink played a crucial role in the lived experience of the Exhibitions. It stood as a powerful semiotic device for communicating and maintaining conceptions of identity, history, traditions and progress, and of inclusion and exclusion. The temperance movement had a profound influence on how people were fed and accommodated during the International Exhibitions. However, Australia's promising wine industry was to be encouraged at all cost. Licensed premises appeared alongside temperance outlets at the Exhibitions as did Coffee Palaces to licensed establishments – bridging, it appears, the contradiction between the ideology of temperance and economics of intemperance. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Australian wine industry was on its knees, killed off by the vine-destroying phylloxera insect, the economic depression of the 1890s and the temperance movement. It did not begin to recover until the 1950s (Pont 161, 200).

While the temperance movement lasted well over 100 years, the life of coffee palaces was relatively short-lived. Driven more by reformist and economic zeal than by good business sense, many were in financial trouble when a worldwide economic Depression hit in the 1890s. Ironically, many of the coffee palaces were forced to apply for liquor licences in order to stay afloat. Others developed another life after the temperance movement's influence waned and the coffee palace fad faded, and many were later demolished to make way for more modern buildings. The Federal Coffee Palace was licensed in 1923 and traded as the Federal Hotel until its demolition in 1973. Some significant examples still survive, however, the Hotel Windsor in Spring Street, Melbourne, now a five-star hotel, being one (Noyce 2012, 2015). Nevertheless, coffee palaces were once very much part of Australia's cultural and architectural landscape.

Finally, from around 1900, great Exhibitions began to lose their appeal. Intended as a showcase for the industrial revolution, which shaped some of the greatest global, social and

economic transformations, a distrust of exhibitions began to form at the end of the nineteenth century in most countries other than the United States. There was no longer a confident belief in 'progress'. There was an increasing awareness of the element of drudgery in most people's work, and of the existence of poverty in the midst of plenty, records Lovell Chen (30, 44). However, Exhibitions remained an important means of promoting trade in the twentieth century, but as a great public event steadily lost ground to the Olympic Games, the World Cup, and other sporting festivals. The last International Exhibition held in Australia was Brisbane's Bicentennial Expo in 1988, a century after Melbourne's Centenary Exhibition.

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