

# Australiana

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RESEARCHING, PRESERVING AND COLLECTING AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE



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AUSTRALIA'S HERITAGE

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## THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY

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Cedar sofa (detail), Tasmania c 1825–50, with seat and bolster re-covered in green camlet. Private collection, photo courtesy Cedar Light Gallery, Queensland

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# William Paul Dowling: artist, artist-photographer and photographer

Dublin-born William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877) worked in London as a draftsman and artist before his Irish Nationalist political activities led to his being transported to Van Diemen's Land for sedition. Here, the Irish Catholic convict established a reputation as a portrait artist, gradually adapting to the new technology of photography. For the first time, Robert Stevens combines a look at his life, well documented through the many letters he wrote home, with an analysis of his art and photography, to reveal the story of this talented Irish patriot who made a new life in Tasmania.

## 1.

After H Warren, *Attack on the Police by the People under Smith O'Brien in Ballingarry, Ireland 1848*, History of Ireland, c 1854, lithograph, 16 x 13 cm. Agefotostock, image code XY2-1348598

## 2.

After William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Wm Cuffey [Cuffay], Drawn in his Cell in Newgate, By his Fellow Sufferer, Wm Dowling*, lithograph, 1848, 30.8 x 21.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery London, NPG D13148

## ROBERT STEVENS

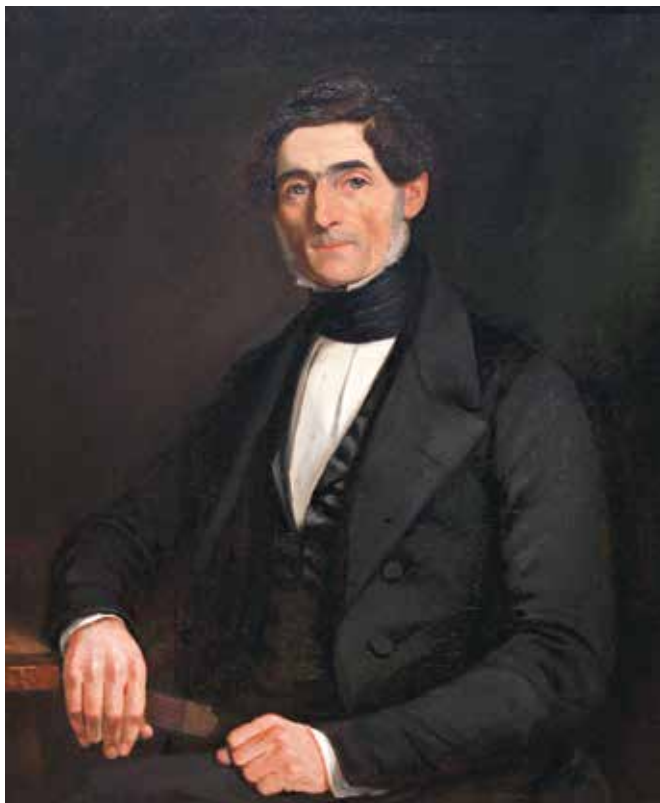
William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), though his birth is often given as 1824, was possibly the 'William Dowling' baptised 26 December 1822 at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin.<sup>1</sup> William was known in the family by his baptismal name, but in Tasmania, outside the family he was often known as Paul, a later confirmation name.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the information about William Paul Dowling comes through his letters, mostly to his brother John in Ireland, edited by Margaret Glover and

Alf Maclochlainn and published in 2005.<sup>3</sup> William was the eighth of nine children of Bernard Dowling and Marcella née McIvor. Bernard, a Catholic attorney, apparently practised from his residence, a shared house at 47 Marlborough Street, a mixed commercial street near the centre of Dublin.<sup>4</sup> Marcella died in 1827 and Bernard in 1846.<sup>5</sup>

He is possibly the William Dowling who attended the Carmelite private boarding school, at the Seminary of Mount St Joseph in the Monastery of Clondalkin, 4 km from the suburbs of Dublin, and won prizes in orthography





and catechism at the December 1838 examinations,<sup>6</sup> and reading and writing reported in July 1841.<sup>7</sup> At the time, only the Church ran such private schools. Daniel O'Connell was a patron of the school, a hero to William and leader of the Irish Nationalists who aimed to repeal the legislation joining Ireland to Great Britain and re-establish an independent Irish Parliament.<sup>8</sup>

Dowling trained as an artist at the Art School of the Royal Dublin Society, and after being admitted to the Modelling (as 'William Dowling') and Landscape and Ornament (as 'William Dooling') Schools in November 1839, won prizes in 1841 and 1842.<sup>9</sup> The award presentation in December 1842 was chaired by the Lieutenant Governor of Ireland, Earl de Grey.<sup>10</sup> The Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Lord Mayor, Archbishop of Dublin and many other eminent citizens attended. William won five prizes: Landscapes in Pencil, Ornaments in Chalk, Cattle in Chalk, Drawings from the Round, and Muscular Figure in Clay. His prizes were a library of books: Jonathan Richardson's *Theory of Painting*, John Flaxman's *Anatomical Studies*, William Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman*

*Antiquities* and Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*.

### An Irish nationalist

Raised and educated in a community where loyalty to Ireland was pronounced, Dowling became active politically, first as an Irish nationalist, then a Young Irelander. At the age of 20, he wrote a poem, 'Liberty'; this verse conveys his nationalist ideals, his education and literary ability:

Up sons of Erin, prostrate race  
Duerd on the swords of liberty,  
Let supplication now give place  
To Freedom's dread authority.  
Ask not, but take, that heav'n  
sprung right,  
Which keens the edge of  
patriot brands,  
Which Saxon fraud, not Saxon might,  
Wrung from your sires'  
unconquer'd hands.<sup>11</sup>

The Irish Potato Famine began in mid-1845, weakening the economy. A cycle of starvation, disease, evictions and emigration commenced, and Irish

### 3.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Robin Vaughan Hood*, 1851, oil on canvas, 77 x 64 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1997:FP0037, gift of Mr & Mrs E P T Simpson through the family of William Percy Hood and the QVMAG Foundation 1997

### 4.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Sarah Lloyd Hood*, 1851, oil on canvas, 77 x 64 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1997:FP0037, gift of Mr & Mrs E P T Simpson through the family of William Percy Hood and the QVMAG Foundation 1997

Nationalism heightened. The poor tried to seize food, and violence increased. The British Government responded largely with indifference or repression.<sup>12</sup>

In July 1846 younger militants in O'Connell's movement broke with their leader, and in January 1847 established the Irish Confederation, under William Smith O'Brien, who had been second



5.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Marie Louise (Minnie) Allport*, 1850, colour crayon on paper pasted on cardboard, paper crayon original, 31.8 x 31.5 cm. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, accession no FA 276a, Record ID SD\_ILS:86500

6.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Marie Louise Crowther*, c 1852, oil on canvas, 35.3 cm (diam). Art Gallery of South Australia, 885P27, M J M Carter AO Collection 1988



### Living in England, 1845–1848

Dowling had begun working as an artist before moving to England about 1845, as indicated in a letter home asking his brother John to varnish a portrait:

*I wish if you can spare time you would buy 2 pennyworth of Mastic varnish ... and take the large brush with a short handle ... and go out to her house ... Before you Varnish the painting feel the dark parts to try that they are quite dry, if so, rub the varnish freely over it not missing any spot, if not, the flesh and light parts first, and then cover the remainder.*<sup>15</sup>

In London he worked as a draughtsman during the railway boom and mixed with both Young Irelanders and Chartists, an action fraught with danger.<sup>16</sup> In 1848, it sometimes became difficult to distinguish between Chartists and Young Irelanders who were mutually supportive.<sup>17</sup> In 1848, many countries in Europe were racked by political upheaval – ‘the most widespread revolutionary wave in European history’.<sup>18</sup>

The Davis Club in London was an Irish Confederate Club, attracting ‘better-off’ Young Irelanders.<sup>19</sup> Dowling became its

Secretary after the previous incumbent was imprisoned for sedition on 8 July 1848. At a meeting when president Kenealy, a barrister away on circuit, was absent, they adopted ‘physical force resolutions.’ Later, Kenealy proposed a new resolution deprecating violence but Dowling and a large majority opposed this, leading to Kenealy’s resignation. Dowling was then invited to join the militant Chartist Committee and was initiated into their projects.<sup>20</sup>

On 10 April 1848, Feargus O’Connor led a mass meeting supporting Chartism on Kennington Common. The meeting was to precede a procession to the House of Commons to present a petition to Parliament. However Prime Minister Lord John Russell persuaded O’Connor not to present the petition, and as a result the rally lacked impact. The radical element, upset by this failure, became more aggressively republican. These were Dowling’s new acquaintances.<sup>21</sup> When Confederate leader John Mitchel was convicted and transported to Van Diemen’s Land in May 1848, unrest increased.

Dowling was in London when O’Brien led an unsuccessful revolt in Tipperary on 29 July 1848. This ‘Ballingarry

to O’Connell. Advocating greater use of force, its followers the Young Irelanders or Confederates included Dowling.<sup>13</sup>

Chartism, a movement which sought political rights and influence for the working class, was active in Britain. In 1838, William Lovett and Francis Place drew up a People’s Charter of demands for The London Working Men’s Association.<sup>14</sup>



Uprising', the most famous of the Young Irelander rebellions, erupted at Widow McCormack's house at Farrenrory, near Ballingarry (**plate 1**).<sup>22</sup> Confederates William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Meagher, Terence McManus and Patrick O'Donohue were captured, convicted and transported to Van Diemen's Land. Then in August 1848, Confederate leaders John Martin and Kevin O'Doherty were sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land.

The radical Chartists planned an armed rebellion. They plotted to set London ablaze in several places, attack and burn police stations and proclaim a republic on 16 August 1848. However, committee member Powell alias Johnston, a police spy, had infiltrated the Chartists. The uprising, known as the 'Orange Tree Conspiracy' as several of the conspirators were arrested at the Orange Tree public house, failed.<sup>23</sup> By the afternoon of 16 August many of the leaders were in custody and troops on full alert at Buckingham Palace, The Tower, Royal Mint, Bank of England and other potential targets.<sup>24</sup>

Dowling was arrested on Lambeth Walk on 20 August 1848 with incriminating Young Irelander

documents and a letter to his sister Ann in his possession. The letter noted his precarious situation, 'I am now an outlaw ... my neck is in danger if I am caught'. He mentioned his intention to abandon politics for a while and paint portraits – perhaps revealing his greater commitment to his profession – but too late.<sup>25</sup>

At his first appearance before a magistrate, Dowling stated that he wasn't an English factionist but an Irish nationalist and wanted only to free his country.<sup>26</sup>

In Newgate Prison, he sketched portraits of his fellow conspirators. A lithograph taken from one of these portrays a smug Chartist leader William Cuffay, a tailor, in the clothes he wore in court, 'immaculately tailored and befitting a man of his trade' (**plate 2**). William wrote that Cuffay had acquired a notoriety which 'his vanity made him mistake for fame', describing fellow Chartist leader George Mullins as 'a surgeon by profession with a heart as light as a bee'. He concluded 'we are more like a pack of big school-boys than half-convicted felons.'<sup>27</sup> Perhaps William had realised the folly of his association with the Chartists.

At his trial on 22–23 September 1848, the prosecution argued that Dowling had

## 7.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Daughters of J R Buckland*, 1850, coloured chalks on brown paper, 49.5 x 41.5 cm. Art Gallery of South Australia 20083D10, gift of P & L Howell through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2008

## 8.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Frances Meredith and Eliza Jane Windsor*, c 1850s, watercolour and pastel on paper. Narryna Heritage Museum, Hobart

joined the Chartists' organising committee to represent the Irish body and stated that William was not charged with being a Chartist. It added that he and his counsel were Confederates who despised the Chartists. Dowling interrupted with one word "No!" – honest, principled and indicating that he respected the ideals of the Chartists and had not been using them for his own ends.

William was found guilty on a second count:





9.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877),  
*Portrait of a Young Woman*,  
c 1850s, watercolour and pastel on  
medium weight wove paper,  
36.5 x 30 cm (oval). Private collection

10.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877),  
*Marion Thomson*, 1851, colour crayon on  
beige paper, 38 x 32 cm. Private collection



branded a felony, you have chosen to  
call patriotism?<sup>28</sup>

Dowling, fellow Confederate Thomas Fay, and Chartists William Cuffay, Joseph Ritchie, William Lacy and later George Bridge Mullins were all sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land.<sup>29</sup> Most were convicted of committing the new crime of 'treason felony', legislated because jurors had been reluctant to find prisoners guilty of high treason, the penalty for which was 'hanging, drawing and quartering'.<sup>30</sup>

On 17 August 1849, Dowling, aged about 26, departed London aboard the *Adelaide*, a ship of 640 tons, built in Calcutta in 1832.<sup>31</sup>

On first sighting Tasmania, Dowling displayed his literary skills:

But the grand object which attracted all eyes was a long range of purple mountains which lay in the distance off our larwood bows, as beautifully varied in its outline as any in our own dear land, here distinctly marked against the lighter clouds and those receding lost in obscurity. But after all it has no attractions for me, there are no classic or social recollections connected with it, it has been the theatre of no

stirring events, the birthplace of no great men. Compared with our own venerable & venerated country, it is as a hothouse mushroom to the tall Cedar of Lebanon.<sup>32</sup>

Father William Hall, who had accompanied Bishop R W Willson to Hobart in 1844, came on board to meet Catholic prisoners and confided that Meagher, O'Donohue, Martin, O'Doherty and O'Brien were held in different places and closely watched. Later, Dowling's Irish loyalty helped him gain the patronage of the Irish clergy and community in a land where Catholics were a minority made up chiefly of convicts and economic refugees from Ireland.

The *Adelaide* arrived in Hobart on 29 November 1849, where Dowling and 39 other men disembarked, then sailed on via Port Phillip to Port Jackson, arriving 24 December 1849.<sup>33</sup> Surgeon Frederick W Le Grand reported that the healthy state of the convicts was due to:

... the attention in the first instances ... to the purification of the ships holds and keeping the hospital etc. dry, clean and well ventilated. Keeping the convicts between breakfast and supper hourly employed and allowing them

that he joined the movement for the purpose of assisting in the dismemberment of the Empire by separating, by force of arms, Ireland from this country.

When asked why he should not receive judgement in accordance with the law, he replied that 'only tyrants insist that patriotism is a felony'. On passing sentence, the judge asked Dowling:

What right had you to set up your understanding against the experience of mankind and the result of ancient wisdom that that which the Constitution of this country has

on deck as much as possible with strict attention to prisoner cleanliness.<sup>34</sup>

Dowling was fortunate to have been aboard a well organised vessel. Not everything had been smooth sailing: 36 rats were caught in the long boat and one found its way into a pot of soup;<sup>35</sup> convict Leacock (Laycock) spent three weeks on the sick list after falling six metres from the windlass down into the hold;<sup>36</sup> convict O'Driscoll (Driscoll) became very ill after 'the sea broke into their hammocks', and required hospitalisation.<sup>37</sup> Life was harsh aboard a convict transport.

In Sydney, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts reported that all the *Adelaide's* convicts had been hired within nine days.<sup>38</sup> In both NSW and Van Diemen's Land, cheap convict labour was in demand.

### The artist in Hobart

Dowling received a ticket of leave and was engaged by Robin Vaughan Hood, who sought an artist and lithographer. Hood had bought John Skinner Prout's lithographic equipment when Prout returned to England in 1848. Dowling, knowledgeable in lithography, was a welcome addition to Hood's staff.<sup>39</sup>

He asked me if I was an artist and could lithograph. I said yes.<sup>40</sup>

Hood, the famous frame maker, lithographer and fine arts dealer, had arrived in Tasmania in 1833. His gallery became a focus for the arts in Hobart. The Hobart Art Exhibition of 1846 was held in his 'New Exhibition Room'. This was Hobart's and Australia's third art exhibition, after those of 1837 and 1845, and preceded The Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia's first exhibition in Sydney in 1847.<sup>41</sup> In 1851, Dowling painted formal oil portraits of Hood and his wife Sarah (plates 3–4).

William established an excellent relationship with Hood who offered permanent employment and permitted him to set up his own business.<sup>42</sup> On 1 January 1850, Dowling opened his studio at 9 Liverpool St, on the corner of Campbell St. He produced portraits in combinations



of pencil, chalk, crayon, pastel and watercolour, and in oil, receiving patronage from eminent families.<sup>43</sup>

The Allport family played a major role in the artistic, cultural and social development of the colony. Joseph, a lawyer, had settled in Van Diemen's Land in 1831 with his wife Mary Morton; Joan Kerr regarded her as 'the most important Lady Painter amongst the earliest manifestations of this species.'<sup>44</sup> Dowling's portraits of children included the offspring of Joseph and Mary Morton Allport – Mary Louise (plate 5), Curzon, Francis Evett and Gordon. Mary Louise (Minnie) was trained by her mother and specialised in delicate watercolours of Australian flowers.<sup>45</sup>

Surgeon, businessman, naturalist and politician William Lodewyk Crowther

### 11.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Fireworks Display at the High School on the Cessation of Transportation to VDL 10th August 1853*, pencil and chalk, 23.5 x 35 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1964:61:5

### 12.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Children's Banquet celebrating the Jubilee of European Settlement and Cessation of Transportation held at New Wharf, Hobart Town on 10 August 1853*, pen and wash heightened with white, 23.5 x 35 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1964:61:6





### 13.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Bishop Willson*, 1853, oil on canvas, 80.9 x 55.2 cm. Courtesy of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Hobart

### 14.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Mother Mary John Cahill*, c 1850s, oil on canvas, 105 x 80 cm. Courtesy of the Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity Australia, MUS/1991.042, Photography by Tim Bauer

### 15.

After William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Horton College, Somercotes, near Ross, V D Land*, c 1855, lithograph, 17 x 24.5 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1976:62:0046

(1817–1885) had Dowling paint some of his children, Edward Lodewyk, Marie Louise (**plate 6**), Henry Lucas and William Edwin. Honorary medical officer at the Hobart General Hospital, Dr W L Crowther was suspended in 1869 for mutilating the body of the aboriginal William Lanney by unlawfully removing the skull for scientific study. He later served as Premier.<sup>46</sup>

Other subjects were the three daughters of John Richard Buckland, the first

headmaster of the Hutchins School (**plate 7**).<sup>47</sup> A delicate portrait of Francis Meredith and her cousin Eliza Jane Windsor hangs in Narryna Heritage Museum (**plate 8**). Francis, a sketcher and watercolourist was a cousin of the famous artist and author Louisa Anne Meredith (1812–1895), who encouraged her in music, sketching and painting.<sup>48</sup>

Geoffrey Stilwell, Curator of the Allport Collection, replying to Joseph Brown, the eminent collector, dealer and philanthropist, described Dowling's portraiture:

All have the same characteristics – broad faces, flattened noses, hair lying too flatly on the head etc.<sup>49</sup>

Early in his Tasmanian career, Dowling painted an oval portrait of an elegant, well dressed young woman (**plate 9**).

### Advent of photography

In the later 1850s these small to medium sized portraits, sketched and with added pastel, crayon or watercolour, were gradually being replaced by photographs. They were Dowling's most numerous works, and he was being squeezed out of the portrait market by the new technology, so it was important for him to understand photography quickly.



## 16.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *W W Fox*, oval photograph albumen silver carte de visite, c 1870s. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1991:P:1965

## 17.

After William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Sir Richard Dry*, 1855, lithograph possibly by R V Hood, 14.5 x 12 cm. Private collection; C Craig, *The Engravers of Van Diemen's Land*, Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Foot & Playstead, Launceston, 1961



This impending change was implied in a letter home in February 1850, encouraging his brother John to take daguerreotypes, which had been introduced into Hobart in 1843. He added

*I mean to try it myself but I will find it difficult to procure materials out here.*<sup>50</sup>

The 1840s and 1850s were an exciting period of cultural activity for Hobart. Photography advanced rapidly. Portrait painters ignored it at their own peril, and landscape artists were faced with a new challenge.

Soon photography became a direct aid to painting and sketching, and the invitation to copy the photograph was irresistible. Dowling was involved in this burgeoning environment.

Busy establishing his business, the only Young Irelander he had contact with was O'Donohue, who took him to meet John Mitchel. Dowling wrote:

*... I don't think I should have known him from the portraits published of him; for although the features are alike, they have not caught the character of his face.*<sup>51</sup>

## 18.

After William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *St Patrick's Church, Jerusalem, Erected A.D. 1856*, lithographer R V Hood, 1856, 26.9 x 44.2 cm. Private collection; C Craig, *More Old Tasmanian Prints*, Foot & Playstead, Launceston, 1984

## 19.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Our Lady and St Joseph*, and Mather Brown, *The Resurrection*, 1856, from *St Joseph's Calendar* 2016. Archdiocese of Hobart Archives and Heritage collection





## 20.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Father William Hall*, 1858, pastel over albumen silver photograph on paper over canvas, 116 x 78 cm. Presented to the sitter by the Catholic Young Men's Society, 22 July 1858. Archdiocese of Hobart, Archives and Heritage Collection

## 21.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Andrew Crombie*, c 1858, pastel over photograph, mounted on a stretcher with cotton backing, not attached, 31 x 26 cm. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, accession no HA382, record ID: SD\_ILS:86493

## 22.

Attributed to William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877) Launceston, *Susannah Fisher*, c 1865, tintype, oil & gilding, 21.5 x 16.5 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM:1996:P0231, gift of Mrs S Best 1959

Mitchel used Dowling's Hobart residence as a refuge and recommended it to John Martin. Later, William and Mitchel discussed publishing an Irish Nationalist magazine in Launceston, but nothing eventuated.



William's fiancée Julia de Veaux, whose family were merchants in Dublin's fashionable Grafton Street, arrived on 13 April 1850, and on 4 May Fr Hall married them at St Joseph's Church Hobart. Witnesses were Robin Lloyd Hood and his mother Sarah.<sup>52</sup>

Dowling moved his studio to the corner of Harrington and Collins Streets where their first child, Henry Emmet Fitzgerald Dowling, was born on 29 January 1851. From August 1851, he begins advertising that he will pay a visit to Launceston in October seeking commissions.<sup>53</sup>

NOTICE. MR. W. P. DOWLING, PORTRAIT PAINTER, Corner of Harrington and Collins-streets. INTENDS shortly to pay his first professional visit to Launceston. Parties in the intermediate Districts desirous of his services will favour him by sending their orders forthwith. Hobart Town, 12th August.

The family visited Launceston in October 1851 and he advertised urging clients 'To prevent mistakes, there being another artist of the name, attention is requested to W P. D's initials and address – St. John-st' to avoid confusion with the Launceston artist Robert Dowling.<sup>54</sup> He had not advertised photography at this stage.



During this visit, William painted portraits of the sisters Marion and Eliza Thomson. The Thomsons were significant landowners residing at Cormiston, West Tamar, on the outskirts of Launceston. Marion (**plate 10**) later married John Manifold of Purrumbete, Camperdown, Victoria on 4 September 1856.<sup>55</sup> Purrumbete had been established by brothers John and Peter Manifold when they became squatters on the land around Lake Purrumbete. Initially, the family had settled on the west bank of the Tamar River in Van Diemen's Land. They became one of the largest and most respected landholders in Victoria.<sup>56</sup>

By this time, William Cuffay was working as a tailor, and Thomas Fay as a labourer. William Lacy, a shopkeeper, had been joined by his family and was successful financially. Joseph Ritchie, less fortunate, was finally working. The country Chartists, without work in their trades because of the lack of industries, were employed as gardeners and farmers. O'Brien had accepted a ticket of leave but, apart from some tutoring, had virtually retired because of ill-health. Mitchel had been joined by his wife and family in June 1851 and was enjoying friendship with Martin. Meagher had married and lived quietly at Lake Sorrell. O'Donohue had completed a book, telling of his maltreatment, especially during his time at Port Arthur. McManus



### 23.

Unknown photographer, *William Paul Dowling*, c 1855, numbered 2 *en verso*. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, PH40/1/574 item 2

### 24.

Unknown photographer, *Julia Dowling*, c 1855, numbered 4 *en verso*. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, PH40/1/574 item 4



had written enclosing his business cards. Kevin O'Doherty was a respected medical practitioner in Hobart. None had escaped at this stage.<sup>57</sup>

Dowling wrote passionately expressing his patriotism:

Let us teach our children that,  
though born in a foreign soil, they  
are still Irishmen and heirs to the  
land of their fathers – that their title  
is from time immemorial, and that  
sooner or later the hour will come to  
claim their possessions.<sup>58</sup>

Ireland was basically a colony governed from London, but Dowling's commitment to a free Ireland was becoming fettered due to family responsibilities and pressures of business. Dowling, a very good man, was working hard and putting the well-being of his family ahead of personal ambitions. Their second child Mary was born in Launceston in February 1852. By November the family was living at Melville Street, Hobart where Mary died.<sup>59</sup>

### Artist and artist-photographer

Dowling established his studio in Macquarie Street, Hobart, opposite Hutchins School, advertised teaching ladies drawing, and likely was taking photographs. Third child Juliana (Nannie) was born in Hobart on 15 May 1853.

In August 1853 he sketched images of the Jubilee Festival celebrations on the 50th anniversary of British settlement in Van Diemen's Land and the joyous end of convict transportation. These show the fireworks display held on the Domain in front of Hobart High School, and the Grand Jubilee Banquet, set up in the Hobart storehouses of Isaac Wright. William's friend Robin Hood published lithographs.<sup>60</sup> Dowling captured the excitement, optimism and significance of the festivity in these historical, free-flowing images which convey his training and competence in landscape and drafting (**plates 11–12**).

The same year he painted an impressive portrait of Bishop Willson, the first Catholic Bishop of Hobart. Originally life size to the knees and mounted in a highly ornamental Robin Hood frame, it was sadly reduced in size in the 1930s (**plate 13**).<sup>61</sup> Bishop Willson, installed in St Joseph's on 12 May 1844, was devoted to improving the conditions of convicts both in Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island. He established schools, churches and a library.<sup>62</sup>

About this time William painted a reverent portrait in oils of Mother Mary John Cahill of the Sisters of Charity. She was one of five Sisters who volunteered to travel from Ireland to help women convicts and arrived in Sydney in 1838 – Australia's first Sisters. In 1847, three

of them went to Tasmania to assist at the Queen's Orphanage, Cascade Female Factory & Queen's Asylum, and with the male convicts. Mother Mary John Cahill (**plate 14**) was the Superior at the convent established in 1848 for these 'Pioneer Sisters'.<sup>63</sup> Dowling may have used artistic licence, as the crucifix is not the style worn by the early sisters, which was much simpler, smaller and less ostentatious, and the crimping of the cap, under her veil, is not in the correct style.<sup>64</sup>

In November 1853 William moved his studio further down Macquarie Street to the corner of Harrington Street. In May 1854, he taught drawing at St Mary's Seminary, and considered moving his residence from the Crescent so that the frail Julia could be closer to her doctor.<sup>65</sup>

In Van Diemen's Land, Chartists seem to have been treated more harshly than the Young Irelanders. Martin, O'Brien and O'Doherty received conditional pardons in 1854, but not Dowling, perhaps because of his association with the Chartists, or that he had neither achieved the same profile nor received the same publicity in *The Nation*, the organ of Irish nationalism. A humble man who never sought fame, perhaps he was simply overlooked. When John Martin received his conditional pardon, he wrote lamenting that his friend 'the artist' had not received his. Dowling received



**25.**

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Susannah Archer* c 1860, pastel over photograph, 60 x 50 cm. Courtesy of the Management of Woolmers Estate, photograph by James Tyson

**26.**

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Thomas Archer*, c 1860, pastel over photograph, 60 x 50 cm. Courtesy of the Management of Woolmers Estate, photograph by James Tyson

**27.**

Henry Mundy (c 1798–1848), *Thomas Archer*, c 1830s or 1840s, oil on canvas, 110 x 83 cm. Courtesy of the Management of Woolmers Estate, photograph by James Tyson



is now one of the ‘History of Ireland in 100 Objects’ scheduled to appear soon on an Irish stamp.<sup>67</sup> O’Doherty later settled in Queensland.

Dowling was one of the few Young Irelanders who chose to stay in Tasmania contributing to the fledgling society. The choice was mainly because of his family responsibilities, but also as he was a sincere and intelligent man who perhaps now understood the consequences of unbridled political ambition. As he explained,

For myself I bargained for no honour, I courted no popularity or publicity, I desire no reward except the consciousness of doing my little best for Ireland.<sup>68</sup>

His letters kept up his ties with family in Ireland. His sisters Anne and Maria had recently died, Anne from cholera on the voyage to Van Diemen’s Land and Maria in Ireland. His brother John had married Charlotte.<sup>69</sup> William and Julia’s fourth child William died soon after birth in 1855.

In June 1854 Dowling was continuing to advertise classes in landscape and figure drawing in his studio in Macquarie Street opposite the Catholic Church, indicating an ongoing commitment to painting.<sup>70</sup> He moved to Davey Street, Hobart opposite Hampton Road. in October 1854, possibly seeking

premises more suitable for photography.

Dowling sketched Horton College, lithographed in 1855, the year the College opened. This image highlights William’s drafting skills (**plate 15**).<sup>71</sup> The College was a prestigious Wesleyan boys’ boarding school located near Ross, its success due to headmaster W W Fox’s diligent care in the training of hundreds of boys over his 26-year tenure. William photographed a cdv of Fox in the 1870s (**plate 16**).<sup>72</sup> The school, designed by William Archer and founded by Captain Samuel Horton, closed in 1894, and was demolished in 1917.<sup>73</sup>

A lithograph of Sir Richard Dry was produced after a portrait by Dowling in 1855 (**plate 17**). Dry, the first Tasmanian-born Premier and first Tasmanian to be knighted, died in office.<sup>74</sup> His reputation, as the most popular and widely esteemed public man of his day, rested on personal qualities as much as political achievements.<sup>75</sup>

In 1856 Dowling sketched St Patrick’s Church, Jerusalem, lithographed by close friend Robin Hood (**plate 18**). This building was designed by the architect Frederick Thomas, a former convict, and built by Patrick Lynch. Later, Jerusalem was renamed Colebrook.<sup>76</sup>

Again in 1856, he painted figurative panels of ‘Our Lady’ and ‘St Joseph’, located on either side of the altar at St Joseph’s, the oldest Catholic Church in Hobart (**plate 19**). Designed by the former

his conditional pardon in 1855 and full pardon in 1857.<sup>66</sup>

Between 1851 and 1853, Mitchel, Meagher, O’Donoghue and McManus escaped to America. On receiving full pardons, William Smith O’Brien, Martin and O’Doherty returned to Ireland. Irish miners in Victoria presented William Smith O’Brien with a massive cup of Australian gold made by William Hackett in Melbourne. It

convict James Thomson, and built of local sandstone by convict labourers in 1841, St Joseph's was opened and blessed by Father Therry early on Christmas morning 1841. The painting of 'The Resurrection' above the altar was painted by the American artist Mather Brown who also painted religious works which hang in the sanctuary of St Mary's Le Strand, London.<sup>77</sup>

By May 1856 he had moved his studio back to Liverpool St, two doors below Campbell St. He advertised offering a new style of portrait in Swiss crayons, aided by photographs, which indicated that his great ability to overpaint photographs artistically had emerged.<sup>78</sup> Fifth child Marcella was born in 1857, but died less than two weeks later.

A review of the 1858 Art Treasures Exhibition referred to fine works by Sharp and Dowling.<sup>79</sup> The experience of colouring of Sharp's photographs likely assisted with the evolution of William's remarkable pastel overpainted photographic portraits.<sup>80</sup>

In 1858, he produced a fine overpainted portrait of Father William Hall who took special interest in the care of the sick and poor, and the establishment of church schools, the Catholic Young Men's Society and Sisterhood of Mary (**plate 20**). Members of the Catholic Young Men's Society held a special function for their President, attended by 500 people, at which Dowling's full-length portrait was presented. This impressive portrait was an important commission.<sup>81</sup>

While occasionally producing true portraits, more and more he overpainted the surface of enlarged photographs using watercolour, pastel, crayon, oil and combinations of these, and became known as an 'artist-photographer'. Those who adapted in this way survived, those who didn't disappeared. His early enlargements were likely made by re-photographing onto a larger plate, rendering modest increases in size.<sup>82</sup> From the early 1860s the enlargement was likely achieved using the solar camera, or enlarger, which threw the image of an illuminated negative, via a lens, onto a sheet of sensitized paper in a darkened enclosure, and generally

employed glass negatives made with the wet-collodion process.<sup>83</sup>

The cost of adding colour meant that, for a period, photographic portraiture was still the preserve of the wealthy. Dowling, one of the first artist-photographers, followed the earlier conventions, the photographic base almost fully obscured. His pastel portraiture shows an extraordinary skill in working over an almost obscured photographic base. He was arguably Australia's best at this technique. Later, as the quality of photographs improved, it was less necessary to hide the base, and the overall cost fell.<sup>84</sup>

In a letter home from Hobart to her sister in law Charlotte dated 10 June 1858, and after eight years of marriage, Julia gives an insight into William's character:

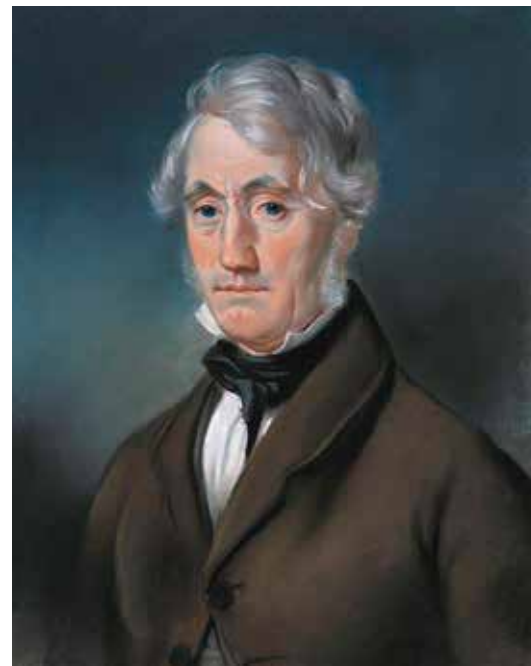
I believe him to be as good a man as it is possible for a human being to be, not an atom of self in his composition.<sup>85</sup>

In Hobart, c 1858, he produced an overpainted portrait on a photographic enlargement of Andrew Crombie, the first council clerk in Hobart 1853–54 (**plate 21**).

### Moving to Launceston and arrival of Matthew

By April 1859 William and Julia had moved from Hobart to George Street, Launceston and his commitment to photography had increased, perhaps to accommodate the skills of his brother Matthew (Mathias Paul or Patrick Dowling), who arrived from Ireland about that time. Their sixth child Bernard John was born 17 July 1859.<sup>86</sup>

Since 1854, Dowling had become embroiled with photography and was painting fewer portraits. He had advised his brother Matthew in Ireland, from 'bitter experience' of the technical difficulties.<sup>87</sup> His commitment to mastering photography is evident, after initial difficulties which are understandable for someone from an art/literary rather than a science/technical background. Photography brought art and science together. He was taking daguerreotypes now, and wrote of sending



#### 28.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *George Ritchie*, c 1860, pastel over albumen silver photograph on paper over canvas, 61 x 48.5 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, QVM 1957.61:2, gift of Mr G D Ritchie c 1939

#### 29.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Unidentified woman*, c 1860, pastel over albumen silver photograph on paper over canvas, 63 x 48 cm. Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, QVM 1956.61:12





**30.**

Matthew P. Dowling (c 1823–1890), *Unknown man, woman and child*, c 1865, hand-coloured cdv, 10.4 x 6.2 cm. Private collection

**31.**

Matthew P. Dowling (c 1823–1890), verso of cdv plate 30, c 1865, 'Dowling' Hobart. Private collection

**32.**

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), verso of cdv, c 1865 'W. Paul Dowling, Photographer and Artist, Quadrant, Launceston.' Private collection

some home to Ireland, but unfortunately none seems to have survived.

Photography was advancing rapidly. Many new methods were evolving, such as salted paper prints, calotypes, wet plates, ambrotypes, tintypes, albumen prints, dry plates, chromatypes and stereographs. These techniques were soon available in Tasmania and known to Dowling. The wet-plate collodion process had reached Van Diemen's Land in 1854. William took wet-collodion negatives and likely ambrotypes, though again none has been identified.

Australian examples of albumen prints date from 1855.<sup>88</sup> Most are contact prints from wet-plate negatives. Dowling used albumen paper for his cdvs, and, using wet plates and the solar camera, produced his enlarged, pastel overpainted photographic portraits, where the albumen prints were generally attached to a canvas stretcher and overpainted. Occasionally albumen emulsion may have been applied direct to the canvas.

In Hobart in 1855, Walter Dickenson had established a Calotype Gallery in partnership with John Sharp. Later in 1855, on Dickenson's return to England, Frederick Frith succeeded him in the partnership. In June 1856, after Frith had set up his own business, Dowling started painting photographs for Sharp, preferred ahead of Alfred Bock.<sup>89</sup> Dowling, a more skilled artist, also charged less. Knowledge of salted paper and the calotype process would have passed from Dickenson to Sharp, Frith and Dowling.<sup>90</sup>

To THE PUBLIC.-Having seen a written paper in Mr. Frith's window, intimating that certain photographs exhibited by me in Messrs. Walch's shop were taken by his late partner, Mr. Sharp, of the firm of Sharp and Frith, I beg to state that I was in partnership with Mr. Sharp for upwards of two years, and that the photographs in question were taken by us jointly during that time, and that Mr. Frith had no connection whatever with Mr. Sharp at the time of their being taken. Mr. Sharp is quite aware that I am exhibiting those

photographs, and considers that I have a perfect right to do so. Mr. Frith himself, after he left Mr. Sharp, exhibited specimens which were photographed by Mr. Sharp, and only coloured by him. I, on the contrary, was constantly in the habit of taking them, Mr. Sharp having communicated to me (and to me only) the entire secret of his admirable mode of operating, by which he acquired the reputation of being the best photographer in the Australian colonies.

To shew the opinion entertained of me as a photographer by Mr. Sharp I quote the following passage from a letter which I received from him this week, in reference to photographs executed by me since my arrival in Launceston :— "The photographs which you sent me are first-rate, particularly that of the Rev. Mr. Ewing." And in a letter to Dr. Grant, of this city, he says, "Mr. Dowling is perfect master of the chromotype process." I feel indebted to Mr. Frith's peevishness and Jealousy for affording me this opportunity of laying these flattering testimonials before the public. William Paul Dowling, George street, Opposite the Post-office.<sup>91</sup>

The wet-plate collodion process was suited to studio portraiture, but less so for landscape photography, as the plates remained sensitive only while wet and thus required portable chemicals, water and a dark room. In 1855 the collodion-albumen dry plate process arrived and was simplified in 1858.<sup>92</sup> Dowling was unlikely to have used dry plate negatives, as the exposure time was about twice that for wet plates and too long for portraiture.

In 1858, the tintype process reached Australia under the name melainotype.<sup>93</sup> A tintype portrait of Susannah Fisher, taken in Launceston in about 1865, may have been taken by Dowling. The chair has the same ornately carved back and cushion seat as one which appeared as a prop (also helping to keep the subject still) in several of his cartes de visite (cdvs). The lower area of this photograph has been extensively



overpainted in oil, and the plainer chair legs, which are too heavy and crude, appear to have been painted in (plate 22).

Chromatypes, which used chromium rather than silver sensitising salts, were being produced in Hobart in 1855. William knew the process well, as indicated on 13 April 1859 when he advertised in the *Launceston Examiner* the establishment in Launceston of 'Dowling's Chromatype Gallery', which by 26 April had become 'Messrs Dowlings' Chromatype Gallery' after his brother joined him in late April 1859.<sup>94</sup> The full advertisement of 13 April lists some of William's influential subjects:<sup>95</sup>

**DOWLING'S Chromatype Gallery.** — George-street (opposite the post-office.) Wm. Paul Dowling, Artist and Photographer, begs to inform the ladies and gentlemen of Launceston and the surrounding districts, that he has opened the above establishment, and respectfully solicits an inspection of his specimens

Mr Dowling's chromatype portraits are produced the full size of life, and when finished in oil or crayons they present the appearance of highly finished paintings, while in point of resemblance they can only be equalled by the reflection in a looking glass. Mr Dowling has devoted his entire time

for the last two years to this branch of the art, and has been favoured with sittings from numbers of the most influential persons in the colony, among others he may mention — their Excellencies Sir Henry and Lady Young, the Hon. The Speaker, the Hon. Messrs. Champ, Anstey, Wedge, Allison, Clarke, Weston, Kermode, Bisdee, Gell, Douglas, Drs. Bedford, and Officer, &c. He has also executed portraits for the Lord Bishop of Tasmania, the Bishop of Hobart Town, the Lord Chief Justice, the late Mayor, and most of the Merchants and Traders of Hobart Town.

The Photographic Department will be conducted by his brother Mr. Mathias P. Dowling (Prizeman and Graduate in the Dublin School of Chemistry under Sir Robert Kane), who has lately arrived in the colony with a magnificent apparatus, including a set of Grubbs new patent lenses of the largest size, which for beauty of definition, and absence of focal distortion are considered by the scientific world to be unequalled.

Matthew worked exclusively as a photographer, William as a painter and photographer. Julia increasingly disliked Matthew, and a rift developed, prompting

### 33.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Madame Marie Carandini*, c 1863–1865, photograph albumen silver carte de visite on card 10.7 x 6.5 cm. State Library of Victoria, accession no H10446

### 34.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Ronald Campbell Gunn*, c 1862, photograph gelatin silver print copy of original carte de visite. Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Q613

### 35.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Mrs Ronald Campbell Gunn* (née Margaret Legrand Jamieson), c 1862, photograph gelatin silver print copy of original carte de visite. Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Q614

William to write in August 1859 '... she declares she will never sit with him at a table.' By 1860, Matthew was travelling around the countryside and independently taking pictures, perhaps induced by the tense situation with Julia. He was in Deloraine from about May to July 1860, and in Torquay in January 1861.

In 1864 an advertisement noted 'Mr Dowling also continues to take Crayon-





### 36.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *George Augustus Robinson*, copy of a photograph, sepia toned carte de visite, 10 x 6 cm, c 1860s. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, SD\_ILS:615750, received from R C Gunn 29 Sept 1873

### 37.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Unknown man*, c 1864–1866, carte de visite, 6.4 x 10.1 cm, printed on front 'Dowling Dublin'. Libraries Tasmania, Launceston Library, LSC/PF

### 38.

Advertisement for Paul Dowling's Portraits by the new Elephanton process, from *Walch's Tasmanian Almanac* 1864



**PORTRAITS.**

THE  
NEW ELEPHANTON PROCESS.

**MR. PAUL DOWLING,  
ARTIST & PHOTOGRAPHER,**

Bears to inform the gentry of Launceston and the North, that he has the honor to introduce to their notice, the above beautiful style of Portrait, which is now all the rage in Europe. It has obtained its name from the resemblance it bears to painting on ivory, and is particularly suited for Portraits intended to be hung in a Drawing-Room.

MR. DOWLING also continues to take Crayon-Chromatype Portraits, by which he is enabled to reproduce small and even faded daguerreotypes, as large as life and equal to Oil Paintings.

MR. D. has recently made great improvements in his "Carte Portraits," having just imported a variety of glass-house accessories, by the aid of which, he is enabled to produce more artistic effects.

Terms:—For a Single Carte, 10s. For Six, £1. For a Dozen, 90s. Copies, 2s. 6d. each, or £1 per dozen.

QUADRANT—JOHN-STREET,  
**LAUNCESTON.**

Chromatype Portraits.'

By the late 1850s, Tasmanians were producing stereographs, taken with a stereo camera and viewed in a stereoscope. William was familiar with these techniques, confirmed in a photograph, taken c 1850s, in which he is holding what appears to be a Brewster Stereoscope, the stereo card or glass plate yet to be pushed down into the slit for viewing (plate 23).

A camera in the background isn't visible enough to see if it has the twin lenses of models available from 1855 on. Julia posed for her photograph at the same time (plate 24). These photographs have been enhanced by overpainting Julia's bracelet and the brass equipment fittings in gold, and slightly reddening the faces. No examples of stereographs taken by Dowling have been identified.

These innovative photographic processes did not develop in a rigid sequential manner. There was considerable overlap which continued for years. For example, daguerreotypes were still being taken into the 1870s and tintypes into the 1920s.

In Launceston, c 1860, William produced fine portraits of Susannah Archer (1801–1875) and Thomas Archer (1790–1850), likely commissioned at the same time, after Thomas's death (plates 25–26) The portrait of Susannah was a contemporary overpainted photograph. The portrait of Thomas was likely based on a photo, taken by Dowling, of an earlier c 1840 oil portrait by Henry Mundy (plate 27), which was then overpainted, to create the pair.<sup>96</sup> The three portraits hang at historic Woolmers homestead. Thomas Archer had arrived in Sydney 18 January 1812, and was appointed Deputy

Assistant Commissary by Governor Macquarie, then Hobart Commissariat, and, in 1819, placed in control of Port Dalrymple. Woolmers was one of several homesteads the family built. Thomas married Susannah née Hortle in 1816, and she probably commissioned the portraits in the early 1860s, after his death.<sup>97</sup>

Also in the early 1860s William produced an overpainted portrait of George Ritchie. George was the third son of Captain Thomas Ritchie (1789–1871) who in 1833 had established successful flour mills at Scone, his property at Perth in northern Tasmania. George became a successful farmer and councillor. This magnificent work captures the 'different texture of the skin, hair, & cloth of the coat, shirt & tie, using a very difficult medium' (plate 28). Another example is of an unidentified woman, c 1860, her cap and coiffure more typical of the 1840s, and dress the late 1850s (plate 29).<sup>98</sup> These two portraits show Dowling's overpainting skill at its zenith.

### Family grief

While still living in George Street their seventh child, Maria De Veaux was born in 1860, but died soon after birth. Four of the seven Dowling children had died in infancy – Marcella of scarlatina at 16





months; Maria, dysentery at four and a half months; Mary minimus at nine months; and William, a stoppage of the bowel at only 12 days.<sup>99</sup> William attributed these early deaths to Julia's frailty, and his inability to afford a servant. Perhaps contact with toxic photographic chemicals had contributed.

The physical and emotional impact of the accumulated grief, added to the hostility between Julia and Matthew, must have been debilitating. William's low spirits are reflected in his articulately expressed despair at photography replacing 'true art'.

It is so long since I have seen a good picture that I almost forget what a good picture is. I dare hardly call myself an artist, I am only a photographer and as I grow old I find all my personal ambition merge in anxiety for my children and sometimes when I feel a feeble impulse to do "something" I find myself obliged to go and scrub glasses to reflect the "mugs" of snobs. They say Landseer nicknamed this art the "Foe-to-graphic Art" and truly I think it is. This and Julian's French lithographs are the greatest enemies true art ever had. It seduces away its votaries, starves real artists and fills the world with artisteens".<sup>100</sup>

The press reported at the time that William was a "successful manipulator of the Photographic Art", noting that he was one of the first in Tasmania to use a camera.<sup>101</sup>

Early in 1861 he moved his premises from George Street to St John Street, next to the Synagogue where he built a large glasshouse.<sup>102</sup> 'Glasshouses', which provided direct sunlight controllable with the use of screens and curtains, were important for daguerreotypists and wet plate photographers. They could consist of a sloping skylight, bay window, an annex with a sloped roof and side lighting windows, or a proper conservatory in cooler regions.<sup>103</sup>

In mid-1861 he and Julia felt frustrated and isolated – possibly looked down upon because he was an ex-convict, Catholic and Irish – and began to think of returning home to Ireland:

I dare say I could make a living there and I can't do much more here, and we have no comfort in our lives as we feel ourselves in a land of strangers.<sup>104</sup>

The Hobart Art Treasures Exhibition of 1863 included a Dowling watercolour portrait of a man, indicating that Dowling still painted direct portraits. In December 1863 they had moved to a house and



### 39.

Unknown photographer, *William Paul Dowling*, c 1865, numbered 3 *en verso*. Allport Library & Museum of Fine Arts, PH40/1/574 item 3

### 40.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Governor F A Weld*, 1876, mezzotint photograph, 25.1 x 30.9 cm. Libraries Tasmania, Launceston Library, LMSS 754-1-107

### 41.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Unknown man*, c 1870, albumen print cdv, hand coloured, 10.3 x 6.2 cm. Private collection

### 42.

Verso of plate 41



#### 43.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877),  
*F C W Barber in full tartans*, albumen print  
cdv, 10.6 x 6.3 cm. Private collection

#### 44.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877),  
*P L Hearne with tricycle*, c 1870s, cdv,  
10 x 6 cm approx. Allport Library and  
Museum of Fine Arts, NS4837-1-31

shop in the Quadrant where they remained until sailing for Ireland in 1866.

An independent Matthew was based in Hobart for a period, where he entered partnerships with J C Sommers and briefly with P L Reid, before returning to Launceston when his brother departed for Ireland in 1866 (**plate 30**). The brothers' addresses on the back of their *carte de visites* confirm the different addresses of Matthew and William at that time (**plates 31–32**).<sup>105</sup>

*Cartes de visite* (cdvs), introduced into Tasmania in 1859, became an important part of William's business.<sup>106</sup> They were usually made of an albumen print, a thin paper photograph, mounted on a thicker card, approx. 11.5 x 6.5 cm. Multiple negatives were taken on a single glass plate, using a multi-lens camera, enabling the production of inexpensive prints. Cdv's meant the arrival of a cheap portrait available to the public.

They usually had the studio address printed *en verso*, and sometimes advertised new processes. Sitters dressed in their best or made use of the photographer's outfits. Photographs were taken in elaborate studio settings with painted back drops, patterned floor cloths and specially made furniture. Today, familiar settings and props can be used to identify the photographer.<sup>107</sup>

From his studio at the Quadrant, c 1863–1865, William produced a cdv of the famous Tasmanian opera singer Marie Carandini (**plate 33**). His cdv's from this period are characterised by beautiful scenic settings, typified by the painted backdrop, wooden column and balustrade, and heavily carved chair chosen, from a selection of props, by Madame Carandini. This chair appears in several of Dowling's cdv's from the 1860s.

About 1862 he produced cdv's of Ronald Campbell Gunn and his second wife Margaret (**plates 34–35**). These are gelatin silver copies of William's photos. Ronald held several important positions during his career, including Superintendent of Convicts in North Tasmania, Police Magistrate, Private Secretary to Sir John Franklin and Clerk of the Executive and Legislative Councils. He was also an eminent botanist and scientist. His statue stands in City Park, Launceston.<sup>108</sup> The tablecloth used in Gunn's

portrait appears in several of Dowling's cdv's. The painted backdrop, chair, and painted wooden balustrade and plinth chosen for Margaret's photo all differ from those selected by Madame Carandini.

In the 1860s Dowling produced a cdv copy of a photograph, taken earlier, of George Augustus Robinson (**plate 36**). Robinson was brought in as a 'conciliator', his assignment to resettle the Aboriginal people at Wybalenna on Flinders Island. His involvement ended soon after resettlement, and Wybalenna became more akin to a prison. While his initial intentions seemed genuine, his departure is viewed as a 'turning point for the worse', and his place in history is generally viewed negatively.<sup>109</sup>

In 1864 William advertised offering the elephanton process, crayon-chromatype portraiture, and new glasshouse accessories which greatly improved his 'Carte-portraits' (**plate 37**).<sup>110</sup> The elephanton process gave the photograph the softness, delicacy and translucency of ivory. The end result, a product which resembled ivory miniatures, but which aged quickly and darkened, left little likelihood of survivors today.<sup>111</sup>

### Return to Ireland

In March 1866, William and family returned to Ireland. Matthew took over Dowling's Photographic Gallery in the Quadrant. Before departing, William recommended Matthew, referring to his skill as a photographer, and knowledge of chemistry.<sup>112</sup>

William established a photographic business at 20 Lincoln Place in Dublin and exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts in 1868.<sup>113</sup> About 1867 he likely produced a cdv of an unknown man, the print inscribed on the front 'Dowling Dublin' (**plate 38**).

The Irish economy was still depressed and the enterprise probably struggled. 'Home' wasn't living up to expectations, and the family was back in Launceston after two and a half years. Their first child Henry, aged 17, died at sea on the return journey. William, Julia, Juliana and Bernard returned to Launceston 15 September 1868.<sup>114</sup> By this time Irish Nationalist politics had 'passed William by', confirming art as his true vocation and livelihood.

45.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Juliana Dowling*, c 1875, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 cm. Private collection

46.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877), *Father Julian Tenison Woods*, c 1874–1876, cdv 9.5 x 5.5 cm on card 10 x 6 cm. Given to Nora Slattery (Mrs Ryan of Pitt Town) sister of Sr Margaret, Courtesy of Sisters of St Josephs of the Sacred Archives, SO45–016/045



### William and Matthew feud

On his return to Launceston, a bitter family dispute flared and the brothers established rival studios. William based his studio and home in Brisbane Street, and Matthew stayed at the Quadrant. Between October 1868 and June 1869 both advertised in the *Launceston Times*. In mid-June 1869, the mutual antagonism erupted, based on the authenticity of works. Matthew accused William of selling, as his own works, photographs which Matthew had taken.<sup>115</sup> Probably at about this time William's photograph was taken. Although in poor condition, this is an important, later in life, image (**plate 39**).

In 1870 William advertised French mezzo-tint portraits and American sennotypes.<sup>116</sup> Mezzo-tint was a method to soften photographic portraits. The process aimed to camouflage the sitter's disfiguring facial blemishes, often obvious in conventional photographs.<sup>117</sup> In June 1876, William produced a photograph of Governor Sir Frederick Aloysius Weld, reported as a 'beautiful mezzo-tint 10 x 12 inches enclosed in a gilt frame' (**plate 40**). The ornate desk appears in other 1870s photographs.<sup>118</sup> After likely using mezzotint to remove facial imperfections, William added emphasis to the eyelashes

and eyebrows, texture to the hair, and other re-touching. These extensive pen and wash additions have not faded at the same rate as the original photo, and stand out rather crudely, where once they would have blended in at the same tone.<sup>119</sup>

The Weld family was one of the leading Roman Catholic families of England. Frederick served as the 6th Prime Minister of New Zealand, 8th Governor of Western Australia, 4th Governor of Tasmania, and later 12th Governor of the Straits Settlements.<sup>120</sup> This work is of historical importance, and a great compliment to William, that the Hobart-based Governor was photographed in his Launceston studio.

Sennotype, introduced into Australia in 1862, was a printing assemblage process which produced a greater range of tones, much blacker shadows and steady gradation of the mid-tones. Though Dowling advertised the process, no examples of his works have been identified.<sup>121</sup>

Cdvs continued to be a major part of William's business. About 1870, he produced a photo of an unidentified man. With historical portraiture, sitters often cannot be identified. The photo has been hand tinted, the hair and face slightly reddened, and studs and watch chain

painted gold (**plate 41**). *En verso*, the photo refers to 'William Paul Dowling, Artist and Photographer, Launceston', Dowling still referring to himself first as an artist and second as a photographer, to set himself apart from those who hadn't trained in art. Also, *en verso*, the photo advertises the studio address at Brisbane Street, Launceston (**plate 42**).

In July 1874, he photographed three-year-old Francis George Webb Barber, from Westbury near Launceston, beautifully attired in full tartan (**plate 43**); in 1916, at the age of 45, Francis enlisted in the AIF. Also likely in the 1870s, he produced a delightful cdv of the boy P L Hearne with an amazing tricycle with horse seat (**plate 44**). These two photographs show that cdvs, because of their low cost and ease of production, were available for the whole family. Sitters for expensive photographic and true portraits were generally successful adults. Both boys lean on objects to keep still.

William painted a beautiful traditional oil portrait of his daughter Juliana, probably in the mid-1870s before she became a nun (**plate 45**). This painting, painted for his brother John and wife Charlotte in Ireland, is one of his finest works, a special effort made as Juliana





## 47.

William Paul Dowling (c 1822–1877),  
*Father John Nepomucene Hinteroecker*,  
 lying in state, 1872, cdv.  
 Courtesy of the Archives of the  
 Society of Jesus in Australia

(Julia) was a favourite. She played piano solos and acted as an accompanist in several concerts in Launceston.

His health failing, William made Juliana, aged 24, a ward of his friend Father Julian Tenison Woods. Between 1874 and 1876, Dowling took several cdvs of Father Woods, who suggested that Juliana enter the Sisters of St Joseph at their convent at Perthville near Bathurst NSW, where she was known as Sister John (**plate 46**).<sup>122</sup> Later she became Fr Woods's secretary and stayed with him until his death in 1889.<sup>123</sup>

Fr Woods first arrived in Tasmania in 1855 and was ordained in Adelaide on 4 January 1857. He founded the Sisters of St Joseph at Penola, to bring Catholic education to the children of poor families. Saint Mary MacKillop was one of its first members. In 1866 he was appointed the first Director-General of Catholic Education in Australia, and the Sisters of St Joseph, greatly helped by Mary's strength of character and leadership, became the backbone of the Catholic education system. Woods was also a scientist and geologist, publishing over 150 papers in eminent journals and transactions. In 1874 he returned to Tasmania where he formed a friendship with William, then in 1887 moved to Sydney in failing health.<sup>124</sup>

William photographed Father John Nepomucene Hinteroecker lying in state after he had died suddenly on 6 October 1872 (**plate 47**). Invited by

the Bishop of Hobart to conduct a mission in Tasmania, he had contracted influenza in Launceston. He was buried in Hobart, and soon after, his body was exhumed and returned to St Ignatius Catholic Church in Norwood, South Australia, which he had built. Fr Woods and Fr Hinteroecker shared an interest in science and became close friends.<sup>125</sup>

### The last years

In the 1874 Valuation Roll, William was the tenant of a house and shop in Brisbane St Launceston. However in 1875, while he still occupied the property, Juliana was now the owner.

In February 1877 an advertisement for Dowling's Portrait Gallery claimed 'having one of the finest and best lighted studios in the island', likely the result of recent construction work which included a glasshouse. Here, on 3 August 1877, he died of tetanus following an operation; his wife Julia had died some years before.

Reporting his death, the *Launceston Examiner* stated that Dowling was best known for the production of photographic portraits, especially his system of enlarging photos which were then finished in oil or crayons. The *Cornwall Chronicle* noted that 'Mr Dowling was an amiable man of quiet, retiring demeanour, very much respected, and liked best by those who were longest acquainted with him.'<sup>126</sup> Juliana, organist at The Church of the Apostles, remained the owner of the shop, and of the house

next door which Matthew occupied.

By 1878, F Standfield was the owner of the house and photographic studio, then occupied by the photographer Stephen Spurling.<sup>127</sup> Stephen had worked in his father's Hobart studio in the 1860s and later set up in Launceston. His enterprise was very successful, likely assisted by William's state of the art photographic studio.<sup>128</sup>

Matthew inherited the business, sold all the Dowling negatives to W Burrows & Co.<sup>129</sup> and retired. He died, aged about 67, on 25 April 1890 in the billiard room of the Launceston Working Men's Club, where he had been a member for about 25 years; his name was given as M. Paul Dowling.<sup>130</sup> Bernard joined the NSW Police Force in February 1880, but died as a result of a fall from a horse in January 1882. Of the seven children, only the nun Juliana survived. William and Julia had no grandchildren.<sup>131</sup>

On 5 August 1877, two days after he died, Juliana wrote to her aunt Charlotte telling of William's death.

With all his suffering it was a happy death, he was perfectly well prepared and had all the sacraments ... He blessed me and Berny, bade us goodbye and put his arms around Uncle Mat's neck and kissed him and said in gasps – I beg pardon if I ever offended anybody. It was lovely death. His soul was so sweet and simple.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusion

William Paul Dowling was a talented artist and artist-photographer who made a significant contribution to Australian art and photographic history. He established himself in Van Diemen's Land, first as an artist, then as an artist-photographer, and finally as a photographer, but always retained his ability to paint 'true art'. He reluctantly made the change from 'true artist' to photographer, necessary to survive in the industry, but always advertised as 'Artist and Photographer'. He was a devout Catholic, and he and the Church were mutually supportive. Many of the colony's eminent citizens, of all sects, were his customers.

William produced watercolour, crayon and oil portraits, enlarged overpainted photographic portraits and conventional photographs. He was arguably Australia's best exponent of overpainted, enlarged photographic portraits during the brief period when this was a most desirable form of portraiture. He employed several of the new photographic techniques which emerged between 1850 and 1880. With his close friend Robin Hood, he produced historically important lithographs.

A good man, devout and principled, he experienced considerable grief: exiled from his beloved Ireland; the premature deaths of his wife and five of his seven children; the disappointment of the return to Ireland; the dispute with his brother Matthew.



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