

Melbourne author's theory:

POET HAD EARLY LINKS WITH AUSTRALIA

A Melbourne author claims to have discovered evidence linking the English poet Joseph Crabtree (1754-1854) with Captain Cook's voyages of discovery.

The evidence, he says, indicates that Crabtree (under an assumed name) probably accompanied Cook on at least one of his voyages, though he may not necessarily have visited Australia.

Mr Don Charlwood, Victorian Vice-President of the Australian Society of Authors and of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, made the claim during an address to the Australian Chapter of the Crabtree Foundation at Monash on February 11.

The Crabtree Foundation was established at University College, London, in 1954, to foster research into the life and work of the hitherto little-known poet. Crabtree was born on St Valentine's Day — February 14 — 1754, and died on St Valentine's Day, 1854. The first London meeting of the Foundation commemorated the centenary of his death.

Each year since, on the Wednesday closest to St Valentine's Day, a distinguished scholar is invited to deliver a Crabtree Oration.

Australian chapter

Professor Arthur Brown, now professor of English at Monash, was the second Crabtree Orator in the London series and he has been instrumental in forming the Australian Chapter of the foundation. Mr Charlwood was invited to deliver the first in the Australian series of Orations.

Mr Charlwood said that he was first alerted to Crabtree's interest, and possible involvement, in Cook's voyages by the otherwise enigmatic lines:

O Venus, star of ev'ry painting Lover
In this our chilly northern clime,
Let no cloud thy sweet face cover,
Turn to Green that face divine.

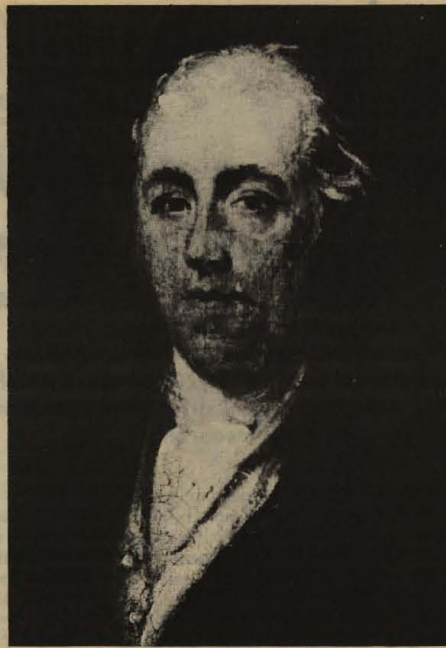
Says Charlwood: "Green, after all, was the astronomer who sailed on that first voyage of Cook's.

"Crabtree is beseeching Venus to aid Green in his efforts to unlock the mysteries of time. So here, I suggest, we have a young man deeply immersed in the purpose of this great voyage to the Pacific."

Mr Charlwood suggests there is stronger evidence of Crabtree's having sailed with Cook in his 1772 voyage on the Resolution in a number of verses written by a "mysterious young able seaman" named Thomas Perry.

Perry, he says, is probably the pseudonym adopted by Crabtree to conceal his identity from the "dogmatic, humorless, suspicious, cen-

THE ONLY known portrait (by an anonymous artist) of Joseph Crabtree. It was found — marked at 10 shillings — in an obscure London antique shop.



sorius, pretentious, contentious, demanding" scientist, John Rienhold Forster, who sailed with Cook on that voyage.

One of Perry's poems now rests in the Forster papers at Greenwich Maritime Museum. It reads:

The ship rides shuddering
down the moon,
The night wind cries, How
soon? How soon?
And I below to my ham-
mock creep
To dream of thee as I drift
to sleep,
And Oh, 'tis far and away
thou art,
Far from my arms, tho'
close to my heart.
But close to my heart is
scarce suffice
When my all with thee I
fain would splice.
Ah, what is man without
that boon?
The ship rides shuddering
down the moon.

This poem, Charlwood says, is entitled "Malus Sylvestris" — the botanical name for the crabtree, the wild apple: "a clue thrown out for those with eyes to see!"

Mr Charlwood concedes that he has no direct evidence that Crabtree came to Australia later in life; but he recalled that Crabtree's supposed epitaph was known to have been sung around Sydney by a "dubious minstrel" named Roger (The Rhymer) Welkhorn.

The epitaph (written either on the death of a friend, or in anticipation of Crabtree's own death) read:

Lo! my mortal race is run,
Higher laurels I have won,
Rest my clay beneath this
sod
While I wing up to meet
my God.

W.A. CHAIR FOR MATHEMATICIAN

A former Monash mathematics lecturer, Dr Terry Speed, has been appointed to the fourth Chair in Mathematics at the University of Western Australia.

Professor Speed gained a doctorate of philosophy and a Diploma in Education from Monash University in 1969.

HOSTS WANTED

Leaving home — whether it's Singapore or Oodnadatta — to study in Melbourne is a big step, and often a lonely one.

But the Monash University Parents' Group has set up a Host Family Scheme to help overcome this problem.

The scheme is open to any overseas, interstate or country students at Monash.

Seventy-seven students and 54 families took part in the scheme last year and some will continue again this year.

The convener, Mrs Meredith McComas, said the group was now looking for new students and families interested in the scheme.

Most of the families who took part had sons and daughters of their own studying at Monash, she said.

Last year there were not enough host families to satisfy student applications so the scheme is hoping for a big response this year.

Students and families are asked to fill in application forms for the scheme and these are matched according to interests.

Mrs McComas said host family activities could vary from inviting students home for a meal to including them in the family holiday.

Application forms can be obtained from the Union Desk or from Mrs McComas, 82 4884, after 4.30 p.m., or Mrs Joan Nankivell 56 4232.

Representatives of the scheme will be in the Union building during Orientation Week to answer any questions.

Chaplain funds

WORK WITH STUDENTS IS HARDER

Chaplains at Monash and other Melbourne universities are finding their work becoming more and more difficult, says recently retired adviser to Jewish students, Mr Henry Shaw.

"We are swimming against the tide because we are not expressing fashionable views," he says.

"But I think there will be a swing back to more traditional beliefs in the next student generation."

Past experience had shown regular changes in polarisation between the two extremes, says Mr Shaw.

Jewish students at present showed greater interest in politics than religion, he added. This did not indicate a loss of faith but rather a change in emphasis.

Demonstrations, lobbying and fighting the AUS Middle East policy had captured Jewish students' attention.

"It is much more interesting for students to organise a demonstration than attend a Bible study class," says Mr Shaw with a wry, understanding smile.

He described his nearly six years as part of the chaplain counselling team as "a unique experience".

"This kind of atmosphere, the friendship and understanding shown by Dr Matheson, and getting to know so many academics has helped make the work with students extremely rewarding," he says.

It was far from being Mr Shaw's first involvement with students. Before taking up his chaplaincy post here he spent 24 years working among Jewish youth in Europe, the last 16 as director of Jewish chaplain services at London universities.

Founding director

He started the Hillel Foundation in England in 1954, founding a directorate in London and also opened a Hillel office in Holland. This year will be his last as the director of Hillel here.

But this year also sees the start of a new "career". He has been appointed to direct Australia's first degree course in Jewish studies, at Prahran CAE.

"I feel too active to sit around twiddling my thumbs," he explains.

Five major subjects will be taught as part of a diploma of arts course. They comprise Yiddish, Hebrew, and Jewish history, philosophy and literature.

"It will be almost possible to take a complete diploma in arts in Jewish subjects — perhaps with one additional subject," says Mr Shaw.

Most interest seemed to be in study of Yiddish, he adds. This was a peculiarly Melbourne phenomenon explained by the fact that a large proportion of the city's 35,000 Jewish community were war refugees and their Australian-born families.

While most of the refugees spoke Yiddish, their children were more familiar with Hebrew. But students now wanted to learn more about the traditional language used by their parents.