

Thousands of images capturing moments of Australian history up for auction

By April McLennan

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A glass plate negative of Ned and Dan Kelly's armour taken during the bushranger's trial at Beechworth in 1880 is among the items up for auction. (Supplied: Rose Stereograph Company)

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A trove of photographs described as "Australia's most significant collection" is for sale by the family of one of the country's earliest photographic companies.

The collection dates back to 1880 and is made up of more than 100,000 items featuring photographs of Ned Kelly's armour, baby photos of Queen Elizabeth II and the landing at Gallipoli.

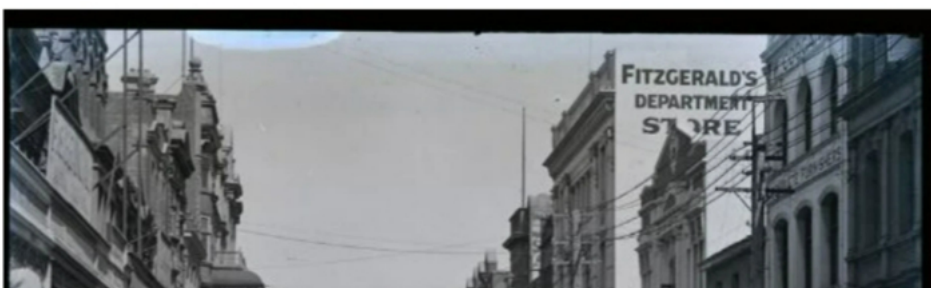
It also includes early images of Hobart — showing kunanyi/Mt Wellington, the city from Bellerive, Collins Street, Browns River and Sandy Bay beach — Launceston, Deloraine, Beaconsfield,

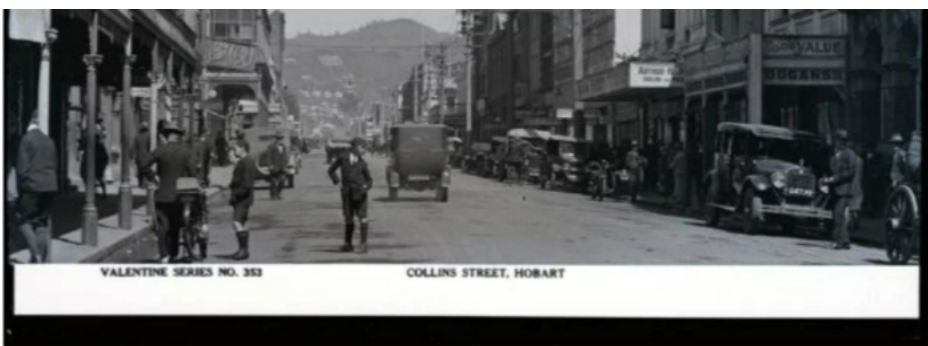
The photographs were taken by the Rose Stereograph Company, which was founded in 1880 by George Rose who was later joined by Herbert Cutts.

The current custodians, descendants Stephen and Jeffrey Cutts, decided it was time to put them up for auction after they were found in a spare room of the family home in Victoria.

Key points:

- More than 10,000 historically significant glass plates, photographs and postcards are up for sale online
- Items include a portrait of a baby Queen Elizabeth with her parents, Phar Lap winning the Melbourne Cup and the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli
- The collection spans five generations and 140 years





An undated image of Hobart's Collins Street. *(Supplied)*

Stephen and Jeffrey Cutts said in a statement it was time to allow others to see them.

"It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to a collection that spans five generations and 140 years," they said.

"We understand that for these historically important pieces to rest with one family is to deny others the pleasure of their custodianship.

"It is for this reason that we have entrusted you as the new custodian of our treasured item."

'Just extraordinary'

Lee Hames, the chief operations officer for Lloyds Auctions, said it was common for people to seek valuations but he was astounded at the significance of the collection.

"Like all of us, there are some family heirlooms that travel through the generations," Mr Hames said.

"This particular gentleman who came forward with the collection gave us a call and said, 'My grandfather told me to hang onto this stuff, it might be worth some money someday'.

"The fact that this family has been able to protect this collection and so many glass plate negatives, which are very fragile, is just extraordinary.

"We don't expect to come across another collection like it for decades," he said.

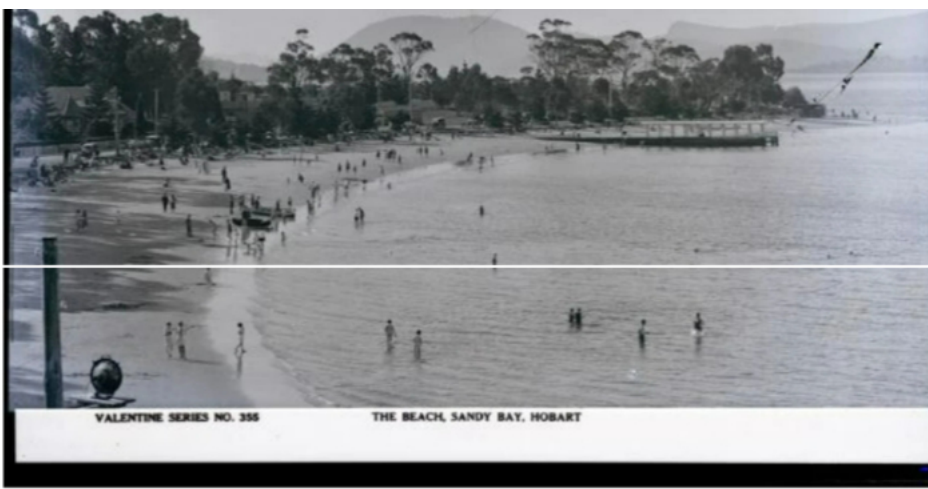
The Rose Stereograph Company operated for 140 years, originally using stereographs, which are cards that appear three dimensional when seen through a special viewer and is often referred to as early virtual reality.

After the rise of cinema and a decline in stereograph popularity, it went onto become a photographic postcard business, capturing significant landmarks and historical moments nationally and internationally.



Images include an infant Queen Elizabeth II with Elizabeth, the Queen Mother and King George VI. *(Supplied)*





The Rose Stereograph collection of images included this early photo of Sandy Bay in Hobart. *(Supplied)*

'We believe this to be a world-first'

Mr Hames said some of the images may never have been seen before.

"There are original glass negatives in this collection that capture the very first moments of not only local Australian but world history," he said.

"We believe this to be a world-first, to offer these tangible original glass plates which rival any modern photographic resolution."

"There's some never before seen images and some really iconic and well-known images amongst the collection."



Images of historic moments, such as Phar Lap crossing the finish line at the 1930 Melbourne Cup, are part of the collection.

The photograph of Kelly Gang armour was taken during Ned Kelly's trial in the town of Beechworth, in north-east Victoria, in 1880.

"Ned and Dan Kelly's armour has got to be one of the greatest icons of Australian history that we saw amongst a collection of many more icons," Mr Hames said.

Another features the landing at Gallipoli that was taken on the Sunday morning of April 25, 1915.

"Interestingly, as far as we can tell, we can't see one fallen soldier on the beach, so it may be one of the first images in existence of

the landing at Gallipoli," he said.



THE LANDING AT ANZAC. SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 25, 1915

(Copyright)

This image of the ANZACs landing at Gallipoli is believed to be one of the earliest moments of the historic event. (Supplied)

Mr Hames said it was "just about impossible" to put a value on certain photographs, including Phar Lap winning the Melbourne Cup and a young Duke and Duchess of York holding their baby daughter, now Queen Elizabeth II.

"We would expect to have some attention from the royal family or at least historians from across the UK and further abroad," he said.

The collection also captured original images of Tasmania's second-largest town, featuring Launceston's Cataract Gorge and Alexandra Suspension Bridge, St John Street and Princess Square.



VALENTINE SERIES NO. 340

LOOKING TOWARDS THE GORGE, LAUNCESTON

Thousands of images capturing early moments of colonial Australia up for auction, including this one of Launceston's The Gorge. (Supplied)

Mr Hames said there are photos of almost every region of Australia as well as snaps from all around the globe, including the Egyptian Pyramids, early alpine mountaineering and a journey to India.

The collection also includes early photos of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Essendon football clubs, ships and landings, Australian buildings and schools and images of royal interest.

"There will be bidding from people that are geographically connected to the imagery and people who are emotionally or historically attached to the imagery," he said.

he said.

"We have investors chasing particular glass plate negatives. We have museums chasing it."

"We just hope that wherever a lot of these super important images go, that they end up on display for Australians to enjoy for many more years."

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