……one of the best pictorial reference resources available on our rich brick heritage in Australia”

John Gribble last General Manager New South Wales Brickworks Homebush Bay and Blacktown
About the Book

The scale and scope of this book is extraordinary. It is the most extensive photographic narrative of over 800 of the earliest bricks, and other clay products in Australia from convict days to more recent times.

Released in November 2009 as a Limited Edition of 1000 and signed by Allan Hackett, the book is A3 size and beautifully presented on high quality gloss paper retailing for $250 AUD.

This is no dry historical reference book. This book tells the stories of the people who made bricks and where they were made. It gathers together information and remarkable early pictographs representing the time and context in which bricks were used in a way that will interest historians, architects, students, archaeologists, collectors and genealogists.

Bricks were a crucial element in the building of our new nation and were part of the cargo of the First Fleet to Australia. Five thousand bricks along with a skilled brickmaker and moulds were carried on HMS Scarborough. Brick making was the first industry in the colony. Australia's first brick building, Government House, was officially opened on June 4, 1789 just 16 months after the landing at Sydney Cove.

Brickmakers were passionate about their products. From their earliest use in this country, bricks were marked by their maker resulting in an interesting and traceable heritage. Most of the old brickworks are no more.

In a book dedicated expressly to the history of brick and clay products, one can enjoy an introduction to this material so deeply connected with our Australian history.

“Allan Hackett has enthusiastically and painstakingly photographed bricks and other clay products, produced within Australia and overseas. We are indeed fortunate that he has taken these steps to share his passion for bricks with the wider public. Being personally involved with brick-making for a considerable length of time in both the modern and more traditional methods of production and firing I commend Allan Hackett's publication. I believe you will have the unique pleasure of looking at an art form that is not only enduring but reflects our rich heritage…..”. John Gribble in the Foreword to “Turn of the First Clay”
Bakewell Brothers

The Bakewell brothers, Robert, John, and Francis, were of Lincolnshire, England, but immigrated to America to live in the trade of lead mining in the New South Wales area in 1821. The oldest brother, Robert, was a blacksmith who had worked in England. He was employed by the government to make tools and forge the iron for the construction of the colony's first buildings.

Robert Bakewell was a skilled blacksmith and his craftsmanship was highly regarded. He was responsible for the construction of the first bridge over the Hawkesbury River, which was a major feat of engineering at the time. The bridge, completed in 1825, was a wooden structure supported by iron girders.

In 1830, Bakewell was appointed as the Master of the Mint in Sydney, where he was in charge of the minting of coins for the colony. He was known for his fair treatment of the workers and his insistence on high standards for the coins he produced.

Robert Bakewell passed away in 1842, leaving behind a legacy of craftsmanship and service to the colony. His sons, John and Francis, continued their work as blacksmiths and continued to contribute to the development of the colony.

NEWCASTLE

On January 26, 1788, a fleet of eleven ships arrived at Botany Bay, New South Wales, to establish the first settlement of the British Empire in the Southern Hemisphere. The fleet was commanded by Lieutenant Governor Philip Gidley King, who was later replaced by Captain Arthur Phillip as Governor of New South Wales.

The first settlement at Botany Bay was short-lived, lasting only a few months before the fleet moved on to Sydney Cove, where the new colony was established. The move was seen as a strategic decision to establish a stronger base of operations for the British Empire in the South Pacific.

The settlers at Sydney Cove faced many challenges, including harsh weather, disease, and hostilities with the local Indigenous people. However, they persevered and established a new nation, which would go on to become one of the most powerful empires in the world.

The first settlement at Sydney Cove was a massive undertaking, requiring the efforts of many people from different backgrounds and walks of life. The settlers included soldiers, sailors, and civilians, all of whom played a crucial role in the establishment of the new colony.

Despite the challenges, the settlers at Sydney Cove succeeded in establishing a new nation, which would go on to become one of the most powerful empires in the world. The legacy of the first settlers at Sydney Cove continues to inspire and motivate future generations, as they work to build a better world for all.
About Allan Hackett

Collector and Author Allan Hackett is passionate about bricks and the way they supported the early development of the colony. He started collecting bricks at the age of 16. Allan and is well known throughout Australia as a brick collector and featured in the ABC program ‘Collectors’ on October 16th 2009. He brings to this book an enthusiasm and story telling style that pulls the reader back to the time and place when the bricks were made. His entertaining combination of history, anecdote and excellent photographs makes this book readable, informative and accessible to both the professional and the passionate amateur.

“My commitment to this unusual hobby came about from my love of Australian history. As I delved further into both the history of our country, and my own family, I discovered that a great, great uncle had taken his part in the brickmaking industry of the 1800s. William Fleming, of the St Mary’s and Penrith districts, was in fact one of the most successful brickmakers in the 1870s.”….Allan Hackett

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