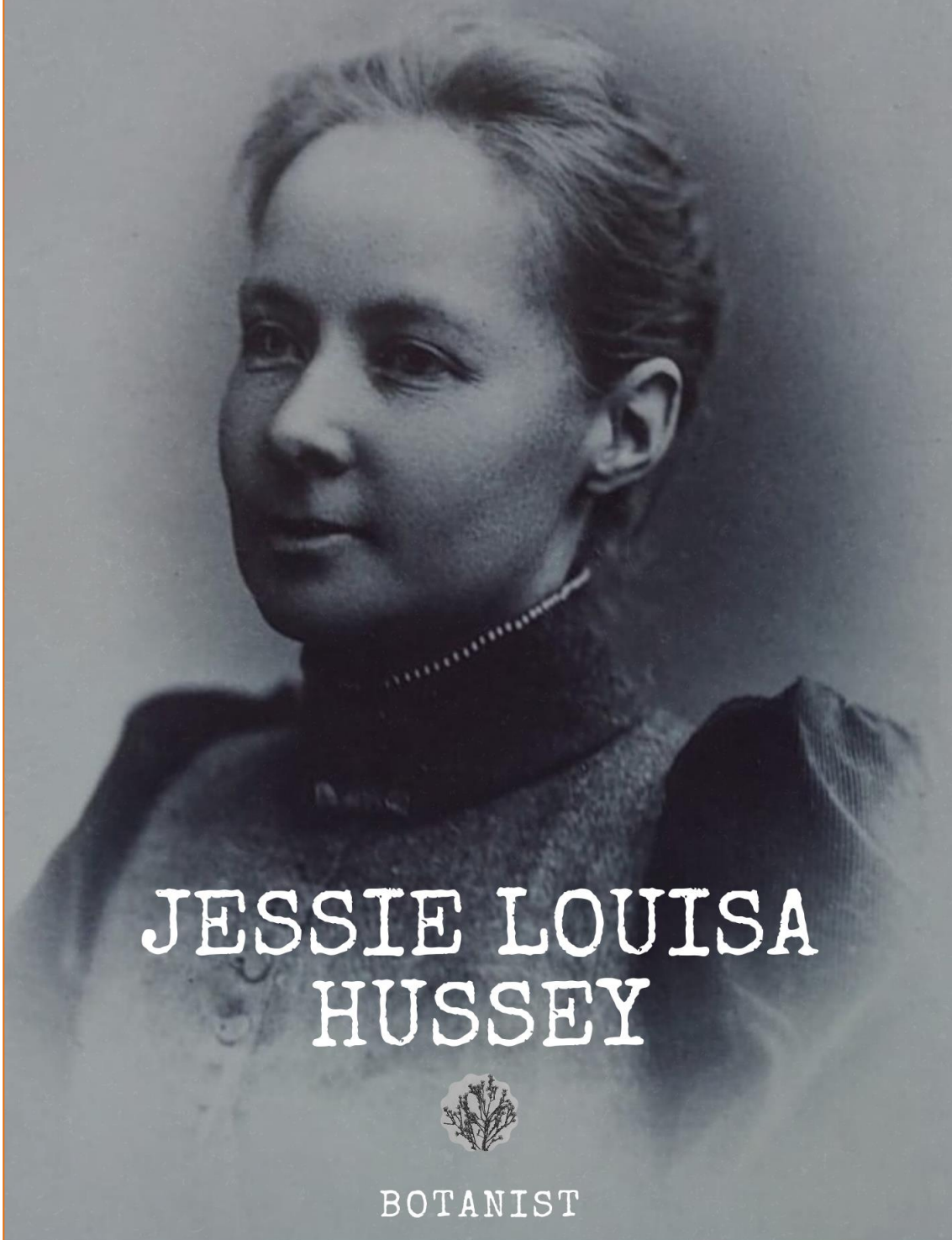


A STORY OF A REMARKABLE
PORT ELLIOT LADY



JESSIE LOUISA
HUSSEY



BOTANIST

5 JUNE 1862 - 16 MARCH 1899

Jessie Hussey's Family

Jessie's story begins in South Australia with Jessie's grandfather George Edward Hussey migrating from London to the new colony of South Australia in 1839. Jessie's father Charles Henry was seven at the time.¹

Charles has been described variously as a drapery salesman, storekeeper and grocer in North Adelaide, a teacher in the vicinity of Melrose and a businessman. Charles married Harriet Ada Webb in 1856 and moved to Goolwa. He then moved to Waterport in the late 1850's and eventually to Port Elliot in 1862. He owned various properties including the Port Elliot general store in 1875 - believed to be number 38 North Terrace (currently the surf shop). The family lived at 42 North Terrace, currently the local butcher.²

Charles was elected to the South Australian House of Assembly from 1877 to 1890 as member for the seat of Encounter Bay. He was also elected to the Goolwa/Port Elliot Council in 1877. Charles died at the age of 67 following head injuries sustained in a fall.^{1, 2}

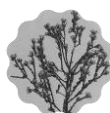


Jessie's home, 42 North Terrace, Port Elliot

Jessie Louisa Hussey

Jessie was born at Goolwa in June 1862, the third in line of 11 children. Sadly five siblings died in infancy leaving Jessie as the only surviving daughter.

Jessie spent her whole life on the South Coast, living in both Goolwa and Port Elliot. When she was 27 years old, she suffered an affliction which left her almost deaf and affected her overall health.³ One of the things she enjoyed was collecting seaweed specimens in the coastal waters around Port Elliot. Jessie was to become internationally known for her collecting and specimens and acknowledged that despite her health, her passion for collecting gave her the chance to "... *be of some use in the world*".⁴



She also used her collections to make small booklets of seaweeds and flowers that she sold to raise funds for charity, for example Adelaide Children's Hospital and Blind and Deaf and Dumb Institution.⁵



Port Elliot 1880 (The Strand)

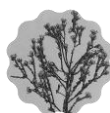
Jessie's Botanical Role

In 1893, government Botanist Ferdinand von Mueller was seeking people to collect different species of seaweed. Jessie's father Charles became aware of this through his connection to local and state government and knew his daughter would be an obvious asset to Mueller's recruitment. Ferdinand Von Mueller was impressed with the quality and quantity of what Jessie collected and sent to him.⁷

Jessie was one of only three botanists who pioneered investigations in the Southern region of South Australia in the 1880s and 1890s.⁷ This was the land of the Ramindjeri people, the most westerly of the Ngarrindjeri living in Southern Australia. Her devoted collecting amassed an impressively large collection of plants in just six years, scoured from local beaches, the hills behind Port Elliot and the hinterland region. This included quite an assortment of seeds, land plants and flowers, as well as her favourite marine algae.⁸

It was to be another thirty something years before there was any other interest in this area. It is also known that a few other South Australian women who collected marine algae were Jessie's friends, for example Eleanor Alice Davey (Nellie).⁹

Travelling around the coastal area for Jessie was relatively easy due to South Australia's first railway line built in 1854. Passengers could travel on



the railway which was built primarily to transport produce from the Murray River paddle steamers to Port Elliot.⁷

Jessie's two main collaborators were Baron Ferdinand von Mueller and Jacob Agardh (see Appendix 2). Mueller was a renowned government botanist for Victoria and encouraged others to collect for him. Over the following six years Jessie collected and sent him over 2000 specimens.^{8,11} The year before she died Jessie became an honorary member of the newly established Mueller Botanical Society of Western Australia. Mueller named *Pimelea husseyana* after Jessie in 1894; it is now called *Pimelea phyllicoides*.⁷

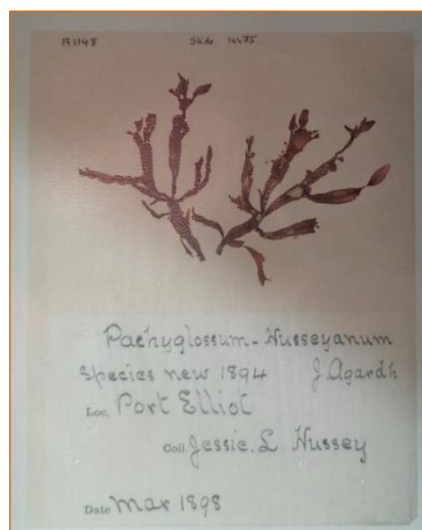


Pimelea husseyana



Crysymenia husseyana

Agardh was an eminent Swedish botanist and identified many algal specimens for Baron von Mueller and Mueller's collectors. After Mueller died, Jessie sent specimens directly to Agardh in Sweden.^{12,13} Jacob Agardh named two new species after Jessie *Crysymenia husseyana* and *Pachyglossum husseyana*.⁸



Pachyglossum husseyana

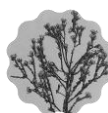


For at least four years Jessie was quite an active member of the Field Naturalist Section meetings, a section of the Royal Society of South Australia, founded in 1883.¹⁴ During this time she sent specimens, exhibited plants, gave presentations and participated in tours, including Port Elliot where members were able to view her collections.¹⁵ In an 1897 meeting, her catalogue of the native flora about Port Elliot was read listing 355 plants. Twenty-five of these were additions to the region and three were new records for South Australia.¹⁶

Jessie developed an extensive network with botanists, phycologists and enthusiasts, both within Australian and overseas. This has resulted in her specimens residing in numerous herbaria and private collections around the world.⁸ Her collections include over 2,000 donated to the South Australian museum, currently in the State Herbarium Adelaide;⁸ collections in the National Herbaria Melbourne; various European herbaria,⁷ and over 1000 algal specimens located in Lund, Sweden.³ In 2004, Rodney Hussey (Jessie's great nephew) and his wife Marcia visited the SA Herbarium in Adelaide. They were shown Jessie's collection by Professor Bryan Wamsley (Photo M. Hussey).



Prof Bryan Wamsley, State Herbarium SA
with Marcia Hussey - Nov 2004



Remembering Jessie Hussey in Port Elliot



CWA Memorial Seat - installed 1992

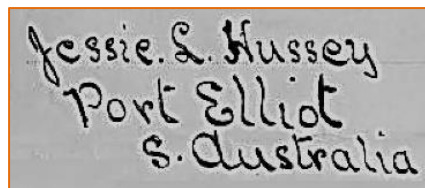
A seat arranged by the CWA in 1992 is dedicated to Jessie and located on Basham's Parade, Horseshoe Bay. A street behind Horseshoe Bay is named after the Hussey Family. Recently a sculpture of a pressed marine plant Jessie collected in Port Elliot (*Hormosira Banksii*) has been installed in Continental Park, one of the locations where Jessie spent many hours collecting specimens in the late 1800's.¹⁷



Sculpture - Neptunes Pearls installed April 2020

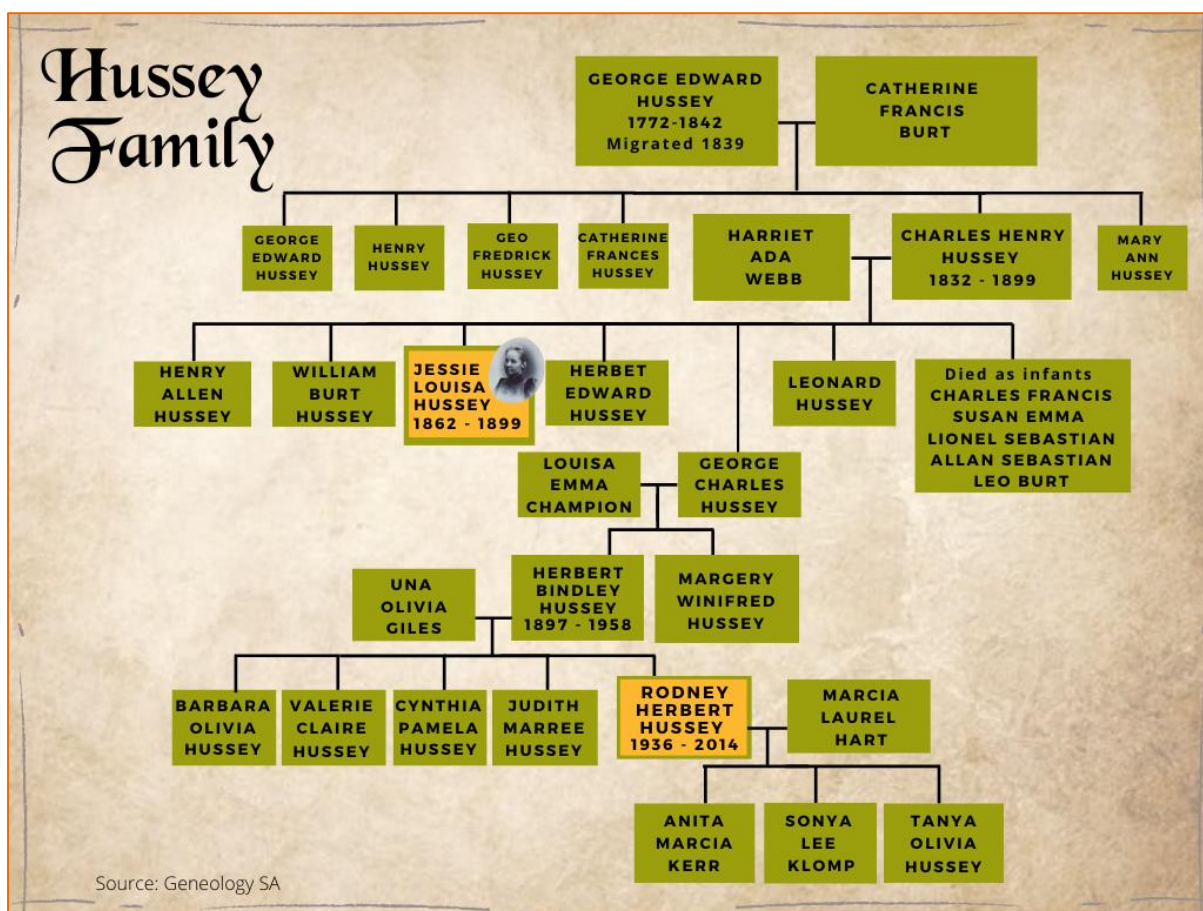


Several of the Hussey family are buried at the Port Elliot cemetery including Rod, Jessie (JL) and her parents, CH and HA Hussey.

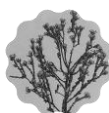


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Hussey Family Tree¹⁸



George Edward Hussey (b. Nov 1772 – d. Sept 1842) married Catherine Francis Burt (b. 1793 – d. Jul 1874), 6 children



Charles Henry Hussey (b. Sep 1832 – d. Jan 1899) married Harriet Ada Webb) b. Mar 1836 – d. May 1914, 11 children

1. Henry Allen (b. Feb 1859 Currency Creek, d. 1909 Port Elliot)
2. William Burt (b. Nov 1860, Port Elliot, d. 6 Feb 1923)
3. Jessie Louisa (b. Jun 1862, Goolwa, d. Mar 1899)
4. Herbert Edward (b. Dec 1864 - 1889, Port Elliot), d. aged 23 Oct 1889, crippled when young
5. George Charles (b. Jun 1866, Port Elliot, d. 31 Jan 1920)
6. Charles Francis (b. Jul 1868 - d. Apr 1869), Adelaide aged 10 months
7. Susan Emma (b. Feb 1870 Adelaide, d. Jul 1870) aged 5 months
8. Lionel Sebastian (b. Apr 1871 Adelaide, d. Apr 1872) aged 11½ months
9. Allan Sebastian (b. Aug 1873 Adelaide - d. 30 Mar 1874) aged 7 months
10. Leonard (b. Nov 1874 North Adelaide, d. Oct 1941)
11. Leo Burt (b. Aug 1879 Port Elliot – d. Oct 1880) aged 14 months

George Charles Hussey (b. Jun 1866 - d. Jan 1920) married Louisa Emma Champion 1893, 2 children

1. Herbert Bindley (b. Feb 1896, Port Elliot, d. Dec 1958)
2. Marjory Winifred (b. Nov 1893, Port Elliot, d. Jul 1979), never married

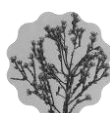
Herbert Bindley Hussey (b. Feb 1896 Port Elliot, d. Dec 1958) married Una Olivia Giles (b. 1897 – d. Sep 1946), 5 children

1. Barbara Olivia (b. Oct 1922 - 1923)
2. Cynthia Pamela Gallagher nee Hussey (b. Jun 1924)
3. Valerie Claire (b. 1928 – d. June 1942)
4. Judith Marree Everitt (b. Nov 1930 Adelaide, d. Mar 2018)
5. Rodney Herbert (b. Mar 1936 Brisbane – d. May 2014 Port Elliot)

Herbert Bindley Hussey married a second time, to Jean Simon, and had another son Christopher Bindley Hussey (b. Jan 1950).

Rodney Herbert Hussey (b. Mar 1936 – d. May 2014) married Marcia Laurel Hart (b. Jun 1941), 3 children

1. Anita Marcia Hussey Kerr (b. 1963)
2. Sonya Lee Klomp (b. 1965)
3. Tanya Olivia Hussey (b. 1969)

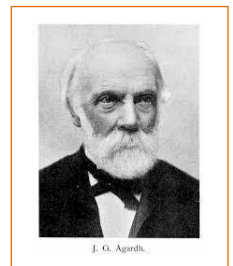


Appendix 2

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller was a pharmacist and Doctor of Philosophy who migrated to South Australia to escape tuberculosis, arriving at Port Adelaide at the end of 1847.¹⁴ He was naturalised in Adelaide and in 1852 took up the post of Government Botanist of Victoria, a sad loss to SA. He became renowned for his collecting and exploration in Australia, encouraging others to collect for him. Consequently, scores of plants were sent to the Melbourne Herbarium, where they are safely stored today. As one of his collectors Jessie sent Mueller more than 2000 specimens, many previously unidentified.^{8,11}



Jacob Georg Agardh was an eminent Swedish botanist who was born and died in Lund (1813-1901). He was a botanist, phycologist (Phycology is the scientific study of algae) and taxonomist, and from 1854 until 1879 he was Professor of Botany at Lund University. He identified many algal specimens for Baron von Mueller and Mueller's collectors.^{12,13}



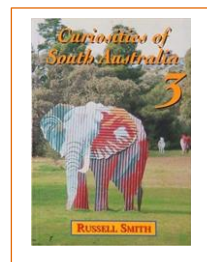
Appendix 3

The publication "People and Plants in Australia" 1981 by Darrell Kraehenbuehl, includes a 10-page chapter about Jessie. In this publication he wrote "*There have been very few women botanists who made their mark indelibly in South Australia. Jessie Louisa Hussey was an exception*".¹⁶ Kraehenbuehl was a well-known Adelaide conservationist and plant enthusiast.



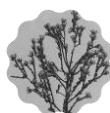
Appendix 4

An entertaining summary about Jessie can be found in a short four-page account by Russell Smith in Curiosities of South Australia 3 (2000), "The Seaweed Collection".⁸



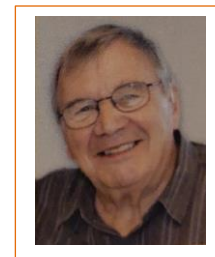
Appendix 5

In 2012, Lisa Waters received a Churchill Fellowship from the Churchill Fellows' Association of South Australia to "*document the significant work of pioneering naturalist Jessie L. Hussey - Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Ireland and the UK*". Lisa gained an interest in this young botanist's life and work in 2008 documented in a 39-page report.¹⁰



Appendix 6

Rodney Hussey died in 2014 after being unwell for some time. In his last year he compiled a folder of information about his great aunt "*Jessie Louisa Hussey Port Elliot Botanist*".⁶ Although Rod owned property in Port Elliot since 1970, the family did not live in Port Elliot until after he retired around 2000. Rod had frequently stayed in Port Elliot from the age of ten years, when he visited his aunt Marjory's good friend Gladys Mudge (Jessie was Marjory's aunt). He used to sleep in the annex of the house next to the railway line at the old fish shop, The Strand.



Rod Hussey was a member of the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association for more than 10 years and was a proud part of the Association's 'Dad's Army' gardening crew (as it was then known). Two Hussey family members, wife Marcia and daughter Tanya are current Association members.

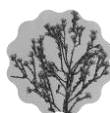
Rod's wife Marcia says "*he was immensely proud of his great aunt and her achievements*". Rod would be thrilled to know that Jessie Hussey's significant and pioneering contribution to the knowledge of South Australia's terrestrial and marine flora in the 1890's is becoming more widely known.

Appendix 7

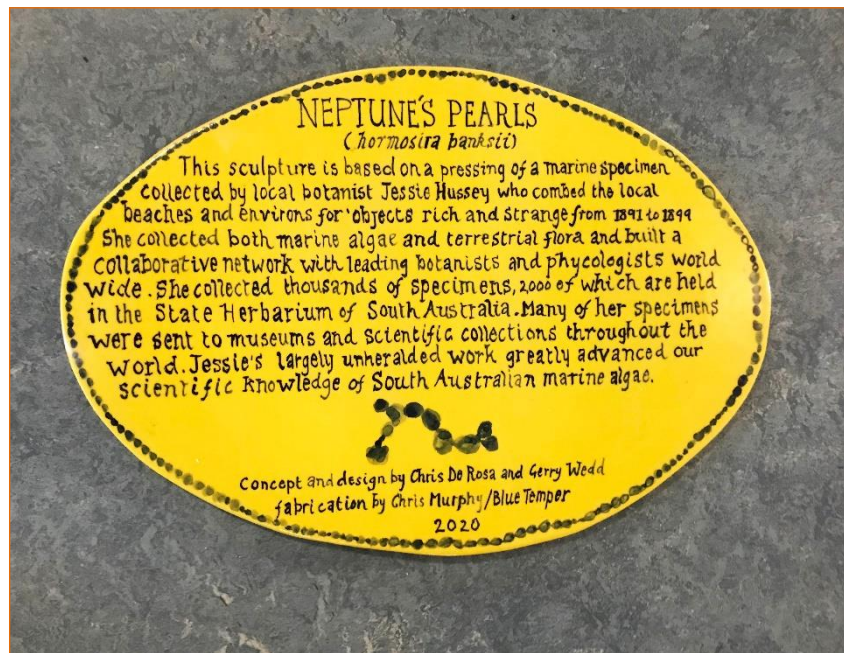
In mid-2019, Alexandrina Council called for an Expression of Interest for a public art commission for Port Elliot. The successful artists were Chris De Rosa and Gerry Wedd of Port Elliot who designed their installation to pay tribute to pioneering Fleurieu botanist Jessica Louisa Hussey. The sculpture honours Jessie's contribution to early years botanical exploration on the South Coast. The sculpture titled 'Neptunes Pearls', has been installed in Continental Park, overlooking Horseshoe Bay.¹⁷

Appendix 8

Chris De Rosa has lived in Port Elliot for almost twenty years where she swims most days and dives into another world full of organisms 'rich and strange'. Her practice explores notions of art, science and imagination examining our physical, cultural and conflicting relationship to the natural world through printmaking, installation and sculpture.



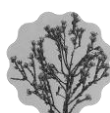
Exploring historical collections and archives is a core element in Chris's practice.



Sculpture plaque - Port Elliot 2020

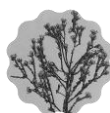
Chris has undertaken several research projects in various parts of the world including the Natural History Museum (London), Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (Naples) and the Melbourne Herbarium. She is currently studying the collections at the Museum of Economic Botany and the South Australian Museum and undertaking a Guildhouse Catapult mentorship with Brent Walter at Negative Press Melbourne.

Chris De Rosa's work is held in various collections including the Australian National Gallery and the Art Gallery of South Australia.¹⁹



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Pimelea husseyana

Information compiled by Ruth Miller, Marcia Hussey and Tanya Hussey, May 2020