

## Editorial

This issue, one somewhat delayed, is, by its contents and thought, a living proof of the increasing dynamic of the discipline of folklore—and of the greater understanding of all folkloric matters, in this country, even as it is also a defiance of the now so fashionable MOOCS (multiple online on line courses, and their bland and yet often sweeping conclusions) as exist on this same field. And it indicates also the need for the general reader to realize, and to reflect deeply, on the mass of significant, but abrasive and temperamentally destructive issues that come under this rubric, and that are filling to overflow our once more traditional daily lives.

Accordingly, we have taken the perhaps quaint step of indexing our journal's pages into the divisions of Names (personal and place), and then of Subjects / Themes as they are to be found in the articles in this issue.

In a very real sense, too, we have made the decision to expand, even more assertively, the area of our field, it now to consider general and proximate fields of study, as highly significant areas for our research, analysis, and scholarly reporting and interpreting. Thus we have continued with our very natural existing interest in Indonesia and so in its religious / mental climate, and the forms of extremism that have so tragically occurred.

And, similarly, we have also considered various of its aspects of the social climate across the Tasman—all such matters being inextricably bound up with the south-east of Australia and with Tasmania. And we would hope to handle further topics as so (reverse) impacts on Tasmania and Victoria, in particular. For it is also the case that the experiences of the settler society there (in southern New Zealand) did, and does still, further challenge so many Australian assumptions as to what would have happened in the early and mid nineteenth century away from the world of convictism.

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Interestingly our pages again feature the creative writings—and other earthly and spirit-nurturing activities—of the late J.R.R. Tolkien, someone not only the most widely known and read, and seen, as a remarkable creative tale teller of the twentieth century. (And we can do this last the more easily by virtue of the mass of writings about / interpretations of his creations that come from our country itself.) We can, also in some justification, or comparison, refer you to the massive scholarship of J.R.R.T., finding it to be listed by Google Scholar for Russia, Poland, Japan and China—this apart from the so numerous

journals, books, and the usually stunning films about Middle-earth, and which New Zealand mind and imagination have been able to create.

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We are also keen to continue reporting on the very fresh and insightful writings of A.A. Jøn, not least because of his Norse background, as well as his earlier training in New South Wales, and his remarkable empathy for things Norse, and Aboriginal, or with all matters of man when he travels on, and lives by the world's turbulent coasts or seeks new lands, even as his own ancestors did. This time we look at some of his New Zealand-centred research, since his removal there.

Whaling, too, has long been a central focus within the history, traditions and lore of New Zealand, rather than merely linked to the recent anti-whaling case before the International Court of Justice. And A. Jon's more recent work is able to enfranchise our Australian folklorist so that he/she will the better savour some of the nineteenth century experiences that bind the two countries.

Myths, economic history, tourism alike, all provide the continuum of whale-watching in Aotearoa- New Zealand. Again our readers may follow an emerging and highly significant area of research that is appropriate to our location in the south west Pacific.

The pieces on music are rich, significant, and they can carry us the more easily to the moods, and, surprisingly, to the world of practical naval music at the time of our greatest navigator-hero. The story of the musical Chisholm sisters prompts questions of the relationship between regional Australia and the Imperial centre, of 'the discipline and particular brand of feminism represented by Presentation and Mercy sisters', and women's experience in general at those times.

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Other areas of (Australian) thought are presented on: Ned Kelly and his gang's fiery end; on World War I, and its Australian home front mores, as well as a piece shedding light on what may well seem to some jingoistic, despite the imminence of war; and, too, on the way in which a small and seemingly insignificant location, in South Brisbane, had particularly recalled meanings to a small child reared there, and these the more poignant in view of the crass materialism which has flourished in much the same spot. All of these indicate the great profundities, historical moments, and deep ironies that can and do surround our everyday lives. More significantly, they are never just concerned with facts, or with book information, but with our society's feelings at a particular time and on a particular issue.

Similarly, the piece on the mortal passing of several members of the Kelly Gang is both unexpected and most welcome, for it indicates,

seemingly, some form of link with the Aboriginal use of fire as a means of control of the environment, even as it revisits an act of utter barbarism, one committed in the name of Law, order, and justice. (And the reader may well reflect on the parallels to a like atrocity well known in one of the Old Norse sagas.)

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We could not but comment more definitively now on the so very life of John Meredith (1920-2010), over and above dedicating the issue of *Australian Folklore* of 2010 to him, actually at his life's end. Now we can act, more appropriately in offering an extended new view (pp. 169, ff.) of the magnificent biography as offered by Dr. Keith McKenry, long his friend, and a wise recorder of, and a like responder to John's many unorthodox actions. John Meredith was born to be a loner and his biographer shows the most remarkable empathy for the solitary and the courageous survivor of all the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune. Or, is this man and his fate, as our Trans-Tasman friends have come to phrase it, a case of 'Man Alone', this surely the Australasian biography of the 1930s as penned by John Mulgan, in his classic and largely autobiographic account of the 1930s in that country.

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In short, we believe that folklore has become of age as a discipline in the last decade, something indicated by the unexpected account of Captain Cook's music and several other fine pieces included in this issue of the national journal.

We are heartened by the quality of the writing, and by the way in which scholars are making the field one of an ever more impressive maturity.

J.S. Ryan and R.J. Smith,  
For the Editorial Board of *Australian Folklore*.

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