

Editorial

Our journal, *Australian Folklore*, is now issuing its twenty-fifth volume,¹ and, like the world titles of note our field, this publication has become—in effect—a representative, and selective, yearbook—and it is endeavouring to move far beyond its formative origins and concerns, those still seemingly in British (antiquarian) post Industrial Revolution thought. For we are now accepting much more deliberately our Pacific location in the twenty-first century, in order to re-appraise the better our non-European setting and an ever more confident sense of identity. Thus our more recent conceptualising of place and purpose is now more akin to that of the journal long called *Asian Folklore Studies*, which, beginning from 2008, has been known as *Asian Ethnology*.

Further, it would seem appropriate to quote from the announcement of its then re-alignment—one more and more like our own—from the words of the Chief Editor, Prof. Benjamin Dorman:

Asian Ethnology is an international, peer-reviewed journal that seeks to deepen understanding of the peoples and cultures of Asia in its entirety. We seek to facilitate intellectual understanding between Asia and the rest of the world, and particularly welcomes submissions from scholars based in Asia. This journal presents formal essays and analyses, research reports and critical book reviews...relating to a wide range of topical categories...and cultural representation; popular religious concepts, vernacular approaches...local knowledge; collective memory and uses of the past. (Announcement of intended change, made on 26 November, 2007)

For, Australia—and, perforce, we of *Australian Folklore*, too—have come to realise that our continent is one very much in sight of all the nations of power in the 21st century, with so many such connections and dialogues of responsibility that make us both Pacific and near-Asian at once. Similarly, we as editors both acknowledge colonial's complex legacies, and so many false Australian presences, actions and inept initiatives on greater stages and our earlier selectivity of viewpoint/ neglect of our true role for the Australian people in both research into their experiences and views and the linked themes to be considered for possible publication.

¹ Although starting with two issues a year in 1987, it has long been an annual compilation, in effect a cultural yearbook, somewhat like the Scandinavian countries' open-minded cultural chapters in their *Yearbooks*.

Further, the pattern of reflective and responsible voices to be heard—and these ‘newer’ ones have more recently been represented in our pages—range from Indigenous voices, to a Polish migrant one, to the strangely timeless culture of ancient India, as well as to the (linked) haunting with an earlier identity in their ‘Bollywood’. In more imaginative and outreaching fashion, we have accepted articles from: a West African folklorist, Patrick Muana, trained at the University of Sheffield; and two from the Norwegian, A.A. Jøn, earlier a researcher in the University of New England, NSW, and now writing in South Otago, NZ, as well as training so many Americans serving right across the Pacific Ocean with mind concepts carried in computer games.

The traditional role of folk music and the style of various migrant/ ethnic musicologists and performers to be found in Melbourne—and very generously featured in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (1993)—have become less prominent in the scholarly literature, despite the key role of music at the Woodford Festival, as also in many of the other like concourses. Another folk activity, the imported and adapted food cultures, so memorably begun by the Chinese after the gold rushes, would soon be followed by the distinctive Greek and Italian traditions. Some may well argue that these have failed to fascinate in the new century and so seem to have faded somewhat from the place they had achieved earlier; and, further, the culinary competitions currently featured on Australian television are but a pale shadow of what is possible with genuine cuisines and wines of locality/ *terroir*. However, one is confident that our multiple and diverse non-British food-centred cultural practices and events, so interwoven with the newer locations, heritages and their memories and pride, will flourish again in the foreseeable future of great challenges.

Progress and Progression in our Folklore Discipline since 1945

From the end of World War II, it became clear to many Australians that there was a widespread concern and need to collect the national heritage of both music and words for the apparently forgotten songs—and that was perhaps the chief folkloric concern in those decades. These achievements were remarkable, but it is a sad fact that *Australian Folklore* (commencing in 1989) has had to mark the passing of so many of these stalwarts as with Russel Ward, John Manifold, Alan Scott, Nancy Keesing, and Bill Wannan, John Meredith, and the redoubtable Bill Scott,² but we note that Hugh

² He had earned remarkable plaudits in the British Isles and in the United States of America, quite apart from his endearing ‘Queensland’ style of anecdote and song.

Anderson is still with us, and solidly productive—as is June Factor. While it is difficult and inappropriate to generalise about their successor folklorists, so many more of the latter are today to be found in several of the universities, in funded heritage organizations, and to be salaried by local or other levels of government. Of the several folklorists who teach aspects of the discipline, many have overseas academic/ scholarly antecedents, as was/ is the case with S. J. Baker, Graham Seal, Winifred Ann Trindade, or the long-serving Co- Editor of Australian Folklore.

Of course, all folk and folklorists are essentially listeners and observers, aware of human nature, as well as the inexplicable and elusive ‘Other’, as well as for social order and justice. And thus it is that so many of those collectors in this country are also very well known as Australian-focussed writers, the best known represented in our journal constitute a compassionate canon, starting with ‘Rolf Boldrewood’—the pen-name of A.A Browne, in the gold rushes, and continuing down to the well remembered, the late Bill Scott, the late Patricia Wrightson, Les Murray, or Peter Skrzynecki, all fine scholars and acute observers of the nation’s cultural and so often ‘multicultural’ experiences.

Our Internationals on/ for recording the Australian Folklore Scene

International students of folklore began to come to Australia in a fairly steady stream from the end of World War II, notably (1) the American Fulbright-funded collector of children’s lore, Dorothy Howard (1902-1996), whose fieldwork in Victoria prompted the hugely significant collection of the traditional play customs of Australian children that attracted world attention, initially through the ten articles on this research that she would publish in the United States of America, and subsequently through the records of her work, The Dorothy Howard Collection, housed in the University of Melbourne Archives; and (2) John Greenway (1919-1991), from the University of Colorado—he earlier working productively on the California littoral, and then spending several years in Australia, thus duly producing his many fine volumes surveying Aboriginal culture, such as his Stith Thompson-like *Bibliography of the Australian Aborigines and the Native Peoples of Torres Strait to 1919* (1963);³

and achievement of Australian contemporary legends, as with the immortal story of the pelican and the chihuahua. Notable from him are his classic books, *The Penguin Book of Australian Folksong* (1960), and *The Complete Book of Australian Folklore* (1976).

³ This work certainly did more than any other the basic bibliographical collecting and analysis that made possible the roughly contemporary rise of A.I.A.T.S.I.S. His sensitive and definitive *Ethnomusicology* would appear in 1976.

and many others, especially several reflective ones from the United States of America, while his *The Last Frontier: A Study of Cultural Imperatives in the Last Frontiers of America and Australia* (1976) would add to the significance of the work of Russel Ward.

A variant of this stream of the fresh and the observant was the simultaneous native outreach in that various Australian folklorists began to appear on larger stages and to speak with greater authority than might have been expected: with various articles in *Fabula*, the prestigious journal issued in Germany; in the classic, *Folklore*, in England; and, in the reverse direction, so many from all the continents came to the 2001 Congress of the ISFNR, held in Melbourne. Some years before this, various Australian folklorists had been for inspiration to the Smithsonian in Washington, as discussed in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (1993), while Dr Keith McKenry, a public servant and folk reciter, had moved into the arts and cultural heritage area, and so began his highly successful campaign to draft systems of collecting and preserving folk materials, and these would attain world significance through his work on the UNESCO Committee on the Safeguarding of Folklore in 1985, and then on the like Australian Committee, he as co-author producing its own Report, the imaginative and challenging *Folklife, Our Living Heritage* (1987).

Meanwhile, too, our Australia-born scholar, Benjamin Dorman, long located in Japan, and working on the collection/ publication of an array of cultures for the then *Asian Folklore*, would become a driving force for, and is now the editor, of such significant and representative scholarship in the fields of Asian folklore, in the Far East and further afield. And, in contrast, others based in Australia might well contribute to the centres for folkloric research their recollections of their own first culture, as does Sanjay Sircar quite regularly, with his nuanced memories of India to the Folklore Society's *FLS News*.⁴

The National 'Language', Passing, Acquired, Colloquial

The Australian forms/ registers of the now polyglot English language of the globe have been variously treated in our columns, as with aspects of convictism, of the pastoral industries, from the idiom of the Australian armed forces, and so down to reflections on the experience of Vietnam, and the legacies of that conflict on the conscripted participants.⁵ Interestingly, the lexical work that was

⁴ As in his recent contribution to *FLS News* No. 62, November 2010.

⁵ We may note here, in passing, that Elizabeth Ward, the daughter of the author of *The Australian Legend*, Russel Ward, is presently concluding her sequence of

long needed for Australian English/ lore, after the Anglo-Indian, Morris's work in the 1890s, had largely come from observant and translated New Zealanders with their ear for the nuances of difference, as with Douglas Stewart (1913-1985) and his plays, or the fine linguist, Sidney John Baker (1912-76), they then to be succeeded by W.S. Ramson, the first editor of the *Australian National Dictionary* (1988).

*

Clearly the field for our scrutiny is one without clear boundaries, but, sequentially, its scholarship has been more and more concerned with: the post 1945 years and severance from Great Britain; our society post the Vietnam conflict and its several consequences; an agonisingly slow but sincere attempt at reconciliation with the Indigenous people of the continent; the last also being a consequence of acceptance that the white race is here to stay in the Pacific, and is threatened, like all humanity, with Armageddon. Nowhere are all these mindsets more evidenced than in the fine refractions located in the recent and remarkably comprehensive editions of the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, as edited by Bruce Moore. For its dramatic increase in size, e.g. as between its second (1992) edition and its third (1997), was a jump including: some 3500 headwords; some 2500 new compounds; and some 500 new derivatives—all testimony to both social dynamic and the ever more heterogeneous nature of the 'national' society and its enclaves and (in-)tolerances.⁶

That date is also significant in that 1998 would see the second and expanded and more sharply focussed edition of Graham Seal's *The Hidden Culture*. This has various warranted insertions into the original text, of fresh emphases on: more social interaction then becoming obvious; a changing and so much more cosmopolitan national identity; acceptance of so many new/ newer groups; a perceptibly increased belief in the supernatural; more family celebrations—perhaps from greater affluence and so ease of internal travel; and a fear of the internet amongst the older population.

Later changes would be both positive and regressive; fears of the fresh 'waves of boat people' and yet a measure of acceptance of the hitherto yawning gulf between capital and the labour sector, as may be indicated by several of the 'industrial' articles we have published in the last two volumes, or that of Neil Rattigan on Australian 'bloke' images.

reparation visits that assist older Australians to understand their moral responsibilities acquired there and that still remain, long after that tragic conflict.

⁶ In this respect consider the Robert James Smith article on issues surrounding the Cronulla Riots, in the present volume, and the image on its front cover.

Times of folkloric expansion and (clashing) cultural encounters are both exciting and their recording necessary as human societies evolve and, ideally, become each the more tolerant of the other. We are privileged to have the task of collecting fresh and perceptive studies within a discipline which straddles: the disciplines of both the humanities and the social sciences; the zones of this planet; its numerous languages and long-cherished cultures and fading tongues; and so, too, we endeavour to ponder the ‘global’ that has certainly come upon us all in the last two decades.

Clearly ‘Australian Folklore’—the theme and the journal—are, alike, works in progress, and both have a considerable momentum, one which explains the ever-expanding international interest in our publication, and—pleasingly—a like scholarly recognition and generous support, as the following ‘Acknowledgements’ should indicate.

J.S. Ryan, for the
Editorial Board of Australian Folklore.

*

*

Australian Folklore again wishes to acknowledge the willing co-operation of many groups, organizations, and individuals, including: the executive of the Australian Folklore Association; its Editorial Board; the American Folklore Society; the electronic journal *Folklore*; the London-based journal *Folklore*; the Modern Humanities Research Association (Cambridge) and its bibliographic arm; the Modern Language Association (New York) and its officers; the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of New England; the Head, School of Arts, University of New England; the Head, School of Education, Southern Cross University, Lismore; and the libraries of both institutions; the Australian National Library; the University of New England and Regional Archives, Armidale, NSW; the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh; the Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ; the offices of M. Moravec, Secretary of the Australian Folklore Association, and the various publishers and folklorists contributing to the contents of *Australian Folklore*.

*

*

*