

The academic fellowship and supportive ambience of Wright College,¹ A Longtime Seminal ‘Folklore Centre’—and one significant for the closer study of Australian Social History / Regional Australian Identity, Non-Indigenous / Settler Heritage, and Culture, within the University of New England, Armidale, N.S.W.²

J.S. Ryan³ and many other referenced informants

¹ This general theme was earlier presented in a much shorter form, as on pp. 101-129, in the collected essays about that College’s distinctive style and achievements from 1958 to 1996, the volume being entitled *Wright on Education* (Armidale, University of New England: 2006), a comprehensive perspectives assemblage, and also one edited and compiled by J.S. Ryan, with assistance from an early student member of that College. Adjunct Professor Paul Barratt. Some related developments are now further reflected on in the revised and much expanded (2016) version of this work, namely the sixtieth anniversary and then souvenir folio sized publication, *Wright for New England*, and as then published. In all of this matter, the focus is on the first men’s college—Wright College—in the then relatively recently founded University of New England, itself a University College of the University of Sydney from its opening in 1938, and an autonomous university from January, 1955, and an entity located in the small cathedral city of Armidale, in Northern New South Wales, both being very much ‘decentralised’. The College itself was named for the prominent grazier, the late Dr P.A. Wright, the father of the most distinguished poet, the late Judith Wright.

² An alternative title may well be: ‘A Tertiary Institution Closely Researching All Aspects of the European Settlement Story in Australia Beyond the Coastal Strips and ever analysing all possible records of so colonising / ever recording social change, and Quietly Pursuing the Nation’s Folklore, from 1958-c.1996, and beyond.’

The date 1996 was included to refer to the then apparent final closure of the college, with the demolition of all of its five temporary—but with two floors—wooden residential buildings; however, it has been largely rebuilt, and so opening in a different building mode, but with many of the features of its earlier self, with, however, there still to be achieved as senior in its membership, or as powerful in teaching and research a Senior Common Room as the earlier one, that teaching and research body of the academic staff long interacting so effectively with the academic study of / related to folklore—in certain supportive Departments / Schools of the University of New England. (All this would be in the general area of those disciplines usually studied in a Faculty of Arts, or in the study areas usually to be located in an Australian Faculty of the Social Sciences, and so include Linguistics.)

³ This survey may be verified in much of the detail by *Annual Research Reports* of the University of New England as well as the nationally-circulating—from the 1990s to the earlier 2000s—also the *Research Newsletters* of the Faculty of Arts, University of New England, numbers 1-25, covering in fine detail much of the period in question. The / an earlier and much shorter version of the present text has been read and, at various points, commented on by Emeritus Prof. John D.A. Widdowson, formerly of the Centre for the

ABSTRACT: This paper treats the progression of 'Wright' thinking folklorists through some four generations of folklorists associated with Wright College at the University of New England with a focus on figures such as Russel B. Ward and Alan T. Atkinson. In this way, it explores Wright College as a hub for the development of Folklore Studies in eastern Australia. It also chronicles the movement of the journal *Australian Folklore* from Western Australia to the University of New England in New South Wales.

KEYWORDS: Wright College, University of New England, Armidale, Folklore Studies, Russell Ward, Alan Atkinson, Australian Studies

Desiderata

One of the more obvious limitations to the / any systematic collection of—and more widespread and so thorough tertiary level studies in—the very rich field of (Australian) folklore, folklife and custom, and one so related to the close research analysis of these materials in this country—is still the fact that there are scarcely any well recognised, or always to be seen as purposefully continuing, adequately-staffed centres, and scholarly entities where,

- 1) in dedicated fashion, the careful collecting / scrutinising of folkloric/ like, or folk-historical and like supportive material has been an available and much investigated activity for some considerable period; or one where,
- 2) at the same time, there should be sympathetic teaching at both the various undergraduate and / or postgraduate levels, as well as the regular publication of the results of the ensuing significant research from / into these and other settlement clashes / race mixing, these as so often deriving from / non-British cultural settings, and so, flowing from the persisting and yet ever variously modifying regions / societies from within the whole Australian nation.

For, ideally, several—and variously located—and ever active perspective-obtaining study / research settings are certainly needed, ones where sensitive bush settling / colonial—and, duly, later periods of the more popular / and now much more urbanised culture, can be—and ideally

English Cultural Tradition, CECTAL (within the University of Sheffield, in the United Kingdom), but who is not, however, personally responsible for any of the opinions expressed here, nor for the also now included perceptions of this study of the developing folk culture, as at the tertiary educational level, within Australia. He and his Centre's academic welcoming of both of us, variously, to the institution that he headed for so long is acknowledged with gratitude by both Dr R.J. Smith and myself. (See below.)

have been—steadily researched and taught for some time, and so can have led to linked significant publication and much wider understanding of the emerging and ever growing more complex ethnic identity and behaviour and thought of the population of this continent which has become home to what is now such a polyglot and multi-racial nation.

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And what of the possible characteristics / the likely style, or ready focus of the proffered / to be investigated—or, indeed, of any such Australian centre or supporting / not necessarily tertiary education institution?

In such a sympathetic atmosphere / centre, those leading such variously comparative and/or investigative research should—ideally—be Australianists in their main (employment) focus, initially colonial / comparative in the normal / regular aspects of their training / able to be ‘inter -disciplinary’ in their professional activities as may be appropriate to their major subjects’ teaching / research or normal / regular commitments; and they should be distinctly motif—sensitive to the core structure of appropriate, or significant records and / or all generated writings, behaviour patterns, sighted as well as permanently deposited archival and like narratives, etc.

(It is also to be recognised that much of this work may be associated with spoken language(s) / linguistics departments of employment, and other tertiary language / culture teaching, and research, and for such comparative analysis to be normally operating at the tertiary level.)

Further, such personnel’s formal range of duties (i.e. employment, teaching, and linked research activities) should involve: some mix of Australian social history, the practice of / the opportunity for much close field observation, and so for the enabling of the almost intuitive collecting, recording and easy access to / use of all the possible / appropriate primary and regional archives; any such work should be / have been done sympathetically, and persistently, aiming at a proper both early and scholarly ordering, preservation and analysis⁴ of any such assembled /

⁴ This is very likely to take the form of a thesis, and / or a publication in a reputable journal. Arguably the long period, much more than twenty years, during which *Australian Folklore* has been edited from—within the (earlier) Department of English / the Schools of Humanities, or of the Arts,—all these being at the University of New England, an institution which has much assisted this continual development both amongst its own students and variously around the nation,—must be regarded as both unique in modern Australia, and highly significant in its ability to attract scholars from both the social sciences and, variously, from the realm of creative writing.

Here we may note the very productive folkloric dialogue and research working, as now, and variously, conducted by the journal and its Editors, with scholars from Southern Africa, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand and across southern Oceania, as well as in North America,

preserved materials, and so to develop the habit of assisting most supportively potential / further research work, as well as capturing fugitive local materials both as occasionally printed, regionally deposited, and / or as duly recalled / collected from the local folk—especially at their demises / the break-up of a family / estate / property. Further, and ideally, there should be the ready practice of providing very positive feedback as to the significance of these same materials to those who have assisted with the recording, collecting up, and depositing in appropriate locations all the data concerning both the time and place of their occurrence / usage for that same regional / cultural preservation and / or more aggregated memory.⁵

And the last, too, should then lead to appropriate and the most accessible publication for both relevant scholars and for the actual informants, as well as attracting a quiet and even steady stream of able / curious and then definitely interested new / fresh informants, and, thus, persons soon able to become themselves a next generation of committed (research) students and collectors in the field in the identifiable and meaningful study areas within this same both properly academic and ever more student-popular and even more mentally stimulating—and illuminating—cultural field.

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Historical Beginnings / Pointers Forward from the more culturally aware 1950s, as after the two World Wars, and the massive Immigration that had Changed (the hitherto so British) Australia for ever

A slowly concentrating block of Australian historical and related cultural studies had advanced steadily at the then very new [autonomous from 1955] University of New England, and this study mass was to be available as in external / part time studies, these then offering, for unmatriculated but serious adult students—many courses to be on offer for first degree credit —, and this at a rurally-set institution (and itself located in the tiny inland cathedral city of Armidale, on the cooler and higher Northern Tablelands of New South Wales.)

the British Isles, and variously in Western Europe. A quick snapshot of this mix is to be found in the issue of *Australian Folklore*, No. 30, as released for 2015.

⁵ As at the end of 2015, Armidale still only had an immediate population of some 30, 000 persons,—if a larger district be the vague popular concept, then one of perhaps 90, 000 persons, and this despite its early erected and so colonial period-founded cathedrals, its residential university (the first such non state capital city-located one in Australia) and its ongoing position as a modest but important education and transport hub for the Northern Tablelands and adjacent inland regions of the most populous Australian state, and with an outreach that was long state wide and, in its research work, has striven to be globally aware in a number of spheres in both the arts and the sciences.

This institution was to be the first non-capital city set University for the whole of Australia,—and also, and perhaps surprisingly,—only the eighth nationally in order of its actual date of commencement as a fully state-supported university, as well as the first one not located in a state-capital city; and it was to be founded with a mix of noble and nurturing, as well as socially equitable, concepts—as were soon to be articulated and established by the second Warden (from 1947) of the New England University College, Dr R.B. Madgwick, he to become the first Vice Chancellor,⁶ as from his institution's obtaining its full autonomy from the State Government in 1955.

Then the newly standing free and bold University of New England was to reach out lustily with fresh staff, newly planned teaching areas—several in the first college [its name being Wright College, and it open around the year, in term time for men only, but all these students studying full time, and with classes of part-time students in residence for the rest of the year]; however, it was still in the process of being erected after a disastrous fire in the autumn of 1958 had destroyed the modest but significant and special, if temporary, Faculty of Arts' main teaching building (one named the 'Belshaw Block'). This destruction of its most accessible teaching space would prove to be a remarkable catalyst to the soon quickly evolving methods for much early external student teaching / tutoring, it almost immediately being often transferred to, and long so offered in, the still but slowly a-building same Wright College's residential blocks.

At this time there was the desperate rush to complete an academic studies-and-teaching timber rooms' structure, to be called 'The Milton Building', and one which would long accommodate the Departments of English, History, and the Modern Languages as then offered (i.e. French and German, from Elementary to research level, as in the then planning), and even some linguistics as offered by the lecturers all sharing with their part time students their fresh Australian language research and fieldwork. Clearly, all these placements must have assisted the nurture of subject teachings like that, somewhat later, of folklore, or of drama performance, and of similar subjects' required research fields.

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⁶ Although it is very particularised and detailed, perhaps the best outline account of this so quietly planned and then to be speedily developed institution, and of its early achievement is, perhaps, the present writer's separately published 'Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Madgwick Lecture', the full title of which is: *Robert Bowden Madgwick (1905-1979), Modest Educationalist, Compassionate Visionary, and Civilising Force for his Region and the Nation*, Armidale, NSW: University of New England, 2004.



Figure 1. Aerial photo of part of the College area, with four Wright College buildings in the upper top right corner (1988).

Back to the first Residential College on Campus

And this new residential College, Wright, with three blocks occupied by the end of 1958, would very soon have an around-the-clock academic year, with it by then also providing part-time essential residence periods for non-credit adult education,—both for men and women—as well as a steadily increasing range of Arts-type degrees by its then-to-be-dramatic expansion by means of ‘external / part-time teaching’, and, much more recently, as in the 21st century, it then moving to on line teaching, with an even wider range of disciplines so offered.

For it, the Armidale university level Arts-skewed foundation, was, even then, in 1955, proceeding very quickly to full and most proud autonomy, from first being a tiny and fully residential—as all were full time

students—University College (one founded in 1938, and located in an old pastoral and hilltop mansion) and attached to the metropolitan located—and first such institution in all of Australia—the University of Sydney; and so, as an autonomous body,—from 1955,—the stand alone New England University would soon seek—and succeed in attracting—those who for many years would make up the bulk of its undergraduate members, they being adult students from right across the first settled state area (New South Wales),⁷ and they all aspiring to gain admission to its (originally, and largely, Faculty of Arts’) part time courses as then to be studied by regular correspondence, with rigorous degree course examining at appropriately located and reasonably regional accessible centres across the face of New South Wales.

[Their compulsory shorter / intensive residence time periods in Armidale were first to be made available in this same Wright College, and then in the other like campus residential entities / communities that would be built, progressively for the same purposes.⁸]

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And what was to be the style of the students in the Folk Culture subject areas?

The members of this initially unique in the nation ‘external student’ body—one then seeking further study—for career opportunities beyond the exiting and relatively low level high school state Leaving Certificate / university entrance qualification as in New South Wales,—were to be especially to be drawn from the late 1920s—early 1930s Global Financial Depression generation’s coming-of-age groups, many of them very much folk-life-aware and, quite soon, to become quietly significant and articulate students of their own social / class origins, as in the now so able to be accessed history of colonial / White / (eastern) regional Australia. In short, they could, and would, become many of its so desperately needed new teachers and suitable knowledge exponents, and, duly, as a result of

⁷ For in those earlier years, it was, theoretically, possible to matriculate at 15 years if one was qualified at the end of secondary education, a situation not to be changed in New South Wales until 1967, with an older entry from / after school being obligatory, and so the removal of this sad anomaly. Of course, the unfortunate situation of so much early school leaving had meant that there was a considerable demand for ‘catch up’ education in the years of peace, and that led to the great challenges for the almost so purposefully designed University College/ University, and its sequel qualification, the Bachelor of Letters. (See ahead.)

⁸ The qualification but not for credit Adult Education arm of the University was to be closed in the early 1990s, this bridge to further for credit study thus removed. In short, the remarkably supportive circumstances that created the rich and productive folklore research and teaching for the greater community had almost completely disappeared, and other modes of collecting / teaching would need to be nurtured and supported in different—and as yet untried—ways, these finally becoming on line teaching in the twenty-first century.

their same training, many of them would become very much potential and very sympathetic national / regional culture and Australiana researchers and qualified recorders of like fields' of knowledge.

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And now to the actual teaching personnel of the early New England outreach courses

Hugely significant among their considerable recruitment for the deemed necessary lecturers / teachers for the external degree-seeking students from 1955 onwards, *inter alios*, were to be: one Dr Russel B. Ward⁹ who had just completed at the Australian National University his fine Ph.D., one that, modified a number of times by the Main Editor for the Press,¹⁰ would become the Oxford University Press classic volume, *The Australian Legend* (1958); and, by then, Ward was to be working alongside a quiet and younger Englishman with a keen and burgeoning interest in social and regional history and culture, as well as in the conserving of all possible local archives, and just come from the University of Liverpool, (later Dr.) Robin B. Walker, he to be the author of the fine and standard-setting Sydney University Press regional / folk history publication, *Old New England*;—or, and another thinker—teacher, this time from the more theoretical / intellectual approaches of provincial and southern (Scottish) New Zealand—, and there himself profoundly so nurtured and matured, the very quiet and philosophically-minded theorist of historical studies, Edward J. Tapp.¹¹ J.S. Ryan would, soon after, be appointed by / as through the External Affairs Office for the state of New South Wales, in London, but he still unseen as yet in Australia, in later 1958, and arriving in Armidale in early 1959, before the actual commencement of that yearly session's internal lectures.

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⁹ See the above, pp. 101, ff.

¹⁰ See elsewhere in this issue of the journal for reference to the significant contribution of Frank Eyre.

¹¹ Born in England, he had elected to do early community / pastoral agricultural history work in the Wanaka and Queenstown areas of Central Otago, in New Zealand's lower South Island. He had been attracted to New England in New South Wales by a setting not dissimilar to his more rural working location in New Zealand. And he was like another follower to New England, one J.S. Ryan, the latter having tried his hand at the teaching of regional (especially Scottish) culture, the latter done in the small South Island city of Oamaru, before his moving to Oxford, and the study of early Anglo-Saxon and related cultures, as with such early Germanic cultures' scholars, J.R.R. Tolkien, E.O.G. Turville-Petre, or with the very much documents-focussed Anglo-Saxonist, Dorothy Whitelock. After some place name research and Anglo-Saxon archaeology experience, as in Shropshire and Durham, Ryan would soon be teaching elementary Old English to U.N.E. students in the more elementary English II H, and at higher levels.

The interests of the still abuilding staff in 1958-1959: and, An input from the state's much earlier-founded and closely Sydney-linked Teachers' College nearby

And even as this was happening in the soon burgeoning Departments of History, and of English, so would the¹² new University immediately link up with the almost adjacent and similarly decentralised—and quite closely located,—other higher education experiment for New South Wales, the Armidale Teachers College (it opened in 1928), and, over the years, its (U.N.E.'s) social historians variously, utilising and being extended by the latter's already well organised regional / local / museum studies, these as then very much focussed on / reaching out from—the same hub; this was, of course, the cultural and recording centre of the Teachers' College, it also in the small and diocesan records-rich cathedral city of Armidale, in northern New South Wales, and it, too, was close by, being located on the state's more equably climated Northern Tablelands .

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And what of the several early / quite significant moves into the study area—particularly of (Australian) colonial / regional history and, then, quietly, into many aspects of the so closely related (British / British-like) traditional and New South Wales settlements' period non-indigenous and soon developing Australian folklore?

Progressively, from the 1960s, there was to be significant and very much encouraging U.N.E. / Armidale contact—as through J.S. Ryan and Dr Elizabeth Liggins of the Department of English,—with the apparently somewhat distant but benign parent body of the discipline/ field, this as recorded in the English language, the Folklore Society in London,¹³ and, a

¹² While it is not practical here to articulate the progress of these Armidale-based local studies, as from a very limited study of place and people, these would, duly expand into the full blown all faculties-sympathetic discipline of Heritage Studies, this firmed up by the University duly establishing its multi-disciplines Heritage Futures Research Centre, and so supporting thereby its regularly reported and further shared interdisciplinary research work.

See below, in reference to a neat perspective on all of this development and achievement in the Allen and Unwin book, *High, Lean Country* (2006). More recently (2016), this text has become an e-book, its editors A.T. Atkinson, J.S. Ryan, and Iain Davidson.

¹³ J.S. Ryan would, in 1965, present a paper to its journal on Aboriginal Australian material / lexis pertaining to the Mid-North Coast of New South Wales in particular, as early as 1961, it thus giving much publicity to the Aboriginal religious thought and ideas in his soon to be UN.-released book, *The Land of Ulitarra* (1964; and, further, with its fully revised edition as issued by the New South Wales Department of Education in 1990), one concerned with the (traditional) beliefs and customs of the Aborigines of the mid-north coast on New South Wales. (That work had been much assisted by the support given to it from the outset by Professor A.P. Elkin, Department of Anthropology, of the University of Sydney.) The 1964 book, running through some 18 editions and a number of school placement releases, as up to 1988, was to be described by the poet, Les Murray, as the book that 'saved a nation', he deeming that it had given back in a meaningful way so much of their (almost forgotten)

little later,¹⁴ a similarly stimulating contact with—and, perhaps a decade later, a like warmth of reception from—the distinctive—and the unique-in-that-country Centre for the English Cultural Tradition and Language (CECTAL) at the University of Sheffield,¹⁵ in Northern England; and, duly, from that same CECTAL, there would arise a further fruitful dialogue for Armidale / New South Wales researchers, now with several folklore research teams and like organisations in both Canada (as at the Memorial University, at St. Johns, in Newfoundland) and, variously, as in the scholarly conference travels of the former external UNE research student, Dr Robert James Smith,—and, more recently, the co-editor of *Australian Folklore*—to several of the annual National Conferences / folkloric centres in the U.S.A.

In most of these years, from 1958—and—onwards, and to c. 1980, Australian history and folk culture as in same state's northern regions activities, R. B. Ward, Robin B. Walker—the latter with much energy and success in locating regional records, and J.S. Ryan¹⁶ would be very prominent,—the former as an ideas man for the more grass roots settler culture of the developing Australian nation; the second an eager experiencer and recorder of his new home country, and, with much courage and success—the particularity of colonial New England; the last as a (New Zealand born) researcher into the development of the English language, and a comparativist who would present Australian material through a different 'colonial training' and (partly) Scottish perspective, much as, much later, in the mid-1980s, he would do, variously, as for the King's Hall, in Lincoln, England, for the recently founded University of Lincolnshire,¹⁷ or for the Derby University in the Midlands, and—

regional and ancestral religion, customs and other traditional knowledge to those of Aboriginal descent in that north-east corner of New South Wales.

¹⁴ This would occur in the 1980s, and, later, for the visits and research work there, initially by J.S. Ryan, and, later, by the to be co-editor of *Australian Folklore*, Dr Robert James Smith, for which matter, see further ahead.

¹⁵ For two study leave periods in the later 20th century J.S. Ryan would be invited as a Visiting Professor to this discrete Research Entity within the University of Sheffield, while J.D.A. Widdowson, by then Emeritus Professor, would then visit eastern Australia, and participate in an International Folklore Conference held under the auspices of the University of Melbourne at the end of the century.

¹⁶ Appointed in that year, he would only arrive in Armidale in February of 1959, and immediately be teaching in both English language and literature. Significantly, he would quite soon become a collector of Australian idioms, and also of the various (and especially closer regional) Aboriginal lexis items to be found in Australian English. And so, in the 1960s, and supported by the anthropologist, Professor A.P. Elkin, University of Sydney, he would become the Australian representative on I.C.O.S. (the International Council for Onomastic Sciences, the world body for the serious collection and publishing of research work on place names, (and, to a lesser extent, on personal names), and so he, so invited, so attending several such conferences in Western Europe, as well as writing reports which were regularly published in *Onoma*, it being edited from the University of Leuven.

¹⁷ One interesting feature here was his not so fictional cultural reportage—as, for example, in Olaf Ruhen's *The Broken Wing*—on Australians and New Zealanders serving in Bomber

somewhat indirectly—for the so linked Australian Studies Section in King’s College, in the University of London, as through its outreach work in / through King’s Hall in Lincoln.

The Armidale / U.N.E. link with the University of Sheffield

And, interestingly, the somewhat slow-to-develop-fully Sheffield link—as from the 1980s established with J.S. Ryan,—would assist the by then co-editor of *Australian Folklore*, (Dr) Robert J. Smith, of New South Wales’ Southern Cross University, to make his—and their own—fruitful contacts with folklore work as at the same Centre for the English Cultural Tradition and Language (CECTAL) as attached to the Faculty of Arts, at the University of Sheffield, and duly to make contact and offer papers to (inter-)national conferences in both Canada (1965) and in the United States of America.

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But, long before these developments, other perceptions locally would lead to the development of international understanding and recognitions of the above-mentioned New South Wales work in researching and to much extending the thinking behind—and so then to be then much expanding of—the existing big picture study patterns of Australian History by ever more closely scrutinising regional studies.

Much later than the 1958–1968 period, the style of the Russel Ward-led teaching of ‘Australian History’ (i.e. the meticulous scholarly study of the less official non-Indigenous records and activities of the English-speaking nation that had had several coastal colonial settlements with convicts as their *raison d’être* for ‘colonising’ the great southern land)—as at the same University of New England—would attract the long time stay there of the soon to- be-internationally eminent Dr (and quickly to be prize-winning professor) Alan T. Atkinson;¹⁸ he, much inspired by his highly significant experience of the relevant nineteenth century teaching and rural Irish (folk and other) research in Dublin, Ireland, would prove to be someone who would much raise the profile and quality of an existing

Command, R.A.F., colonials who had flown from Lincoln area bases, as was later discussed in the *Armidale and District Historical Society’s Journal and Proceedings*.

¹⁸ Alan T. Atkinson, is the son of an English-born jackeroo (i.e. a cadet pastoral foreman / overseer) who had first worked for P. A. Wright, the New England political leader and avowed separatist (i.e. he was a leader of the strong New England-based- and long running- New State Movement), after World War I, the migrant duly to marry a local woman close to the pastoralists of the region, and so for his son, Alan, to have as his godmother Wright’s daughter, Judith Wright—the famed Australian poet—and she, and all her writings, to become an extraordinarily potent influence on his own writings on the emergence of the Australian identity, especially in the 19th century.

local production of reflective and close societal research into 18th and 19th century Australian life and work; and this was to be especially concerned with the styles of life and thought away from the early and mainly interacting- with- each—other coastal settlement strips, and so of the earlier settler population, one never penetrating very far into the interior, save along the lower reaches of the ocean-entering rivers.

Thus he, Atkinson, had ‘led the attack’ into a necessary elucidation of the confused perceptions and records of early white settler culture and land occupation, as in his edited fine—and massively document-based / lifestyle-focussed periodical, *The Push from the Bush*,¹⁹ so that, duly, and decades later, it might be transformed into the eminently scholarly and enlightening publication,²⁰ the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, this now continuing to be largely produced / edited by Dr (and, later, Associate Professor) David Roberts, from the same base, the University of New England’s cluster of Australianist and folklore-like issues-focussed historians and cultural scholars and of so very active researchers, these, from an early period, to aim to include in their number persons of Koori (i.e. of [partial] Aboriginal) identity, the latter first appearing at UNE in more advanced Sociology undergraduate units.

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But now, back to the climactic moments in the mid-1950s

However, to return to the—from 1955—so very purposeful expansion of the earlier New England University College—and so to its social context (one founded as a tiny tertiary education-offering residential unit in rural New South Wales in 1938), and of its then, in 1955, unique within the Southern Pacific’s ‘External-to-the-University’ teaching mode—but with significant periods of compulsory residence for all such students; and this was to be a system which, right from the beginning, had involved intensive around the clock teaching when in residence, this given by many lectures, seminars and many compulsory discussion-based tutorials.

And in these same years, the linked similar regular ‘Internal’—teaching, with the same close treatment of the largely Social, Mental Climate, and even Political History Syllabuses, all of these with the judicious inclusion of much Australian folklore-like content, Australian (often pastoral) lexis, and so the so much better understanding of so much

¹⁹ This and the next named publication would draw much scholarly material from these student clusters, especially of the older ‘externals’, whose (inherited and practised) social identity was being clarified for them in their maturity as a consequence of their Australia-focussed degree studies through the University of New England.

²⁰ ISSN 1441-0370, with two parts per year. Initially it had been the Department of History as the publishers, but that became the School of the Humanities, both academic units being within the variously re-configured University of (regional) New England.

of the hitherto neglected community / pastoral and other work records, and also of the masses of the more personal reflective writing, as in so many surviving diaries and memoirs; these to be long so energetically collected up under the leadership of the once so brilliantly successful Bristol (U.K.) archivist / librarian and by now U.N.E.'s Head Librarian, F.H. Rogers,²¹ these to be so much more carefully scrutinised as recognised as invaluable cultural archives .



Figure 2. From the left, J.S. Ryan, F.H. Rogers, and R.B. Ward, they being Senior Resident College Staff in 1970-1971.

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²¹ He would serve for a period as the third Master of Wright College, and living in its Lodge for several years, and ever giving all possible help to the collection of Regional Archives, these only to be transferred, to the other hill (the Teachers' College site) much later, and to be a collection managed under several auspices, national state, and university. See the, as in this present issue.

And now to Colleges, the actual and first special place of focus and of all student cultural experience and thought

The relatively unplanned—but in effect, the highly successful focus—and so a finely supportive centre for much of this quietly purposeful effort,—was to be the above mentioned Wright College, a male residential entity ‘formally / legally created’ in late 1956, and opening its large study bedrooms to its first ‘external’ students, both men—and women (the latter in the internal students’ absence in their vacations) in their appropriate periods of degree- required residence in—and from—the autumn of 1958.²²

Of course, the thinking behind so much of this residential system’s initial growth—and with it a simultaneous emphasis on the thought and heritage of the region (and its careful and nuanced, if ambitious, attempts to obtain a separate statehood²³) is—in some measure—neatly foreshadowed by Russel Ward’s fine and so emerging and nation-defining text, *The Australian Legend* (1958), and his other various ancillary social and political survey volumes. And thus the exploratory style of scholarly thought, and teaching to the difference, the which he had brought with him from his various teaching posts and studies in Adelaide, Melbourne, and then in Canberra,²⁴ was to be shared with his academic colleagues, his history students, and with so many of the young men, with whom he would live in Wright College for a number of years;²⁵ and then he would test and try out, as with his daily social and intellectual contact with a cross section of the UNE student ranks, as well as a nice mix of international students,

²² The externals were to be first in residence in 1958, but in only the three completed blocks, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon. Another group of more senior fulltime students were ‘on the books’, but they had remained in boarding residence in the town, thus providing ballast to a / the internal College membership of the first contingent, it otherwise to have been completely a community of freshmen. However, the town group of 1958 had been able to supply senior student voices on matters of student living conditions and welfare.

²³ This was put to a regional referendum, but lost when Newcastle had been included in the projected new state, and those persons had voted against it for reasons of maintaining their significant shipping and other existing services.

²⁴ There is still here a field for careful investigation, relating to Ward’s father’s early school teaching in North Queensland and in Church Boarding School, Adelaide, as well as his own Marxist forays, especially in the first post war decade, in Sydney and in Melbourne. The last place would afford him close and very significant contact with the younger collectors/scholars, C.M.H. Clark, and the somewhat younger Melbourne folklorist, Hugh Anderson (b. 1927).

²⁵ In 2008, there was held within the University of New England a Conference to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the publication of *The Australian Legend* (1958), and the present writer would contribute a short paper, pp.13-18, it occurring there in a cluster entitled ‘Russel Ward—Influence and Inspiration’, *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2008). An even more significant conference, the 60th, would be held over the October Long Weekend, at the beginning of October, 2016, when there would be released the larger volume, J.S. Ryan (the compiler), and entitled *Wright for New England*. This volume would contain more detailed material concerned with the College’s involvement with history and lore, especially that concerning the eastern and somewhat inland parts of the eastern side of the Australian Continent.

particularly from the South Pacific region, and with a few from south east Asia, and, early on, especially from Viet Nam and from Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

And what of the very early adult /external students when in residence at U.N.E.?

Meanwhile, the indicated vital further academic development was occurring, in tandem with the interests of the now autonomous University's Department of History's British teaching, and so the almost certain / sure fire favourite, Australian history, was to be on offer in more courses and levels, as to both young internal students,—many of whom came from 'bush backgrounds',²⁶—as well as the courses being available to many more 'externals'—or the time's studying-by-regular teaching / correspondence students—and their then needing a portion of their candidature to be completed in compulsory intensive residence, they coming in from all over New South Wales, and also studying by educative correspondence tutoring—and also by progressive instruction as by the appropriate advisory letters—these regularly on a part time basis.

These students had then often already been long in employment, and they were very much life-experienced adults, and these last were to be enrolled in the same courses as full time 'internals', but they, as part time students, were to be instructed both by post with each course's sharply focussed 'advisory letters', and, especially, for the intensity of this phase of their formal studies. in Armidale—so many of them living—for the then compulsory and full time residential spring period (of perhaps 12-13 days, at the end of the August, and into September)—in the first men's only residential accommodation on the main campus segment of the University, Wright College itself.²⁷

And so the already mentioned R.B. Ward and E.J. Tapp would be the first leaders in this adult and working people's now available tertiary

²⁶ The majority came from all over New South Wales, and these were offered—in addition to the compulsory much longer Residential Schools in Armidale—with short weekend ones in regional centres throughout the state, as in Goulburn, Lismore, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, or Katoomba, depending on the home locations of the class of that year. Non-credit schools, of a number of week night meetings, would also be offered in a suitable contents range from Armidale, as with those in Tamworth, Lismore, or Grafton, these last three centres all being in the main very active in the early decades, when the U.N.E. catchment area was especially from the northern third of the state of New South Wales. Later on, the University would have students from all the Australian states, and, indeed, from world-wide, with the rise of e- education.

²⁷ However, the College would also house women students—in segregated areas from the men—during these same compulsory periods of residence for intensive teaching, seminars, and face-to-face tutorials and meetings, with their lecturers and one-on-one sessions with the markers of their own personal assignments. Not surprisingly, the catchment for many years for the Arts-type units would be very heavily weighted by so many women students having missed out in tertiary education due to both the Depression and then the World War.

history learning, they advancing in sensitivity—gaining, and so in their own steady and guided scholarly development and freshly awakened and so much more nuanced and society-comprehending perspectives, especially for those on Australian history and on the nation's ever evolving and more hybridised multi-culture.

Significantly, the courses available in the University's still basic first degree,—the B.A.,—would be much concerned with the social / economic history of the period selected, and so for many with the 'bush' life and work dimension to the growth of the colony into a new nation at the beginning of the twentieth century. And the external students, by conditions of fulfilling the requirements for their B.A. (in the external / correspondence mode) were made to meet with their all their teachers at both the intensive weekend schools (regionally offered, and optional), and in the compulsory residential schools of a week or even 12 days in the then Spring (the Primary and Secondary Schools') Vacation times, these long being obligatory, and conducted face to face with their teachers²⁸ in both lectures and tutorials in smaller groups meeting in the particular academic tutor's [often College-set] study and also in the normal lecturing areas at the University itself.²⁹

This type of unit and the appropriate full sequence in the B.A. degree,—one which, if completed successfully, and at a higher level,—would enable this higher level qualifying student to have the opportunity of suitable postgraduate work, the tasks for which contained / still contain much course work, written examinations, and a short thesis to complete these more advanced courses of part time study.

(The last refers to the lower level postgraduate qualification, the Bachelor of Letters, it somewhat later to be re-named the Master of Letters,³⁰ in both cases with the compulsory two three-hour examinations at the end of the first year of such study, as was the case in the second and subsequent years also with compulsory residence; suitably qualified students could proceed to a post-graduate degree this last involving

²⁸ An excellent account of this process is given by the early Wright College fresher of 1958, one Alan Grocott, in his short memory piece on Russel Ward—as his teacher, and then thesis supervisor—in Vol. 10, No. 2 (2008) of the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, the issue being sub-titled 'Russel Ward: Reflections on a Legend'.

²⁹ Much of this methodology would be appraised in Armidale by persons to be significant to the British Open University, notably Dr (later Professor) R.V.W. Elliot, and who would duly come from Keele in North Staffordshire (in the United Kingdom) to permanent academic employment in Australia, first at Flinders University and then be in charge of University House within the Australian National University, and he would make a number of quiet 'ask, observe and reflect' visits, often staying in the same Wright College during them. See above. Alan Grocott discusses most illuminatingly his own time as an external postgraduate under Russel Ward, *loc. cit.*, pp. 19, ff.

³⁰ Interestingly, when this degree was proposed, there was much comparison with the University of Oxford's so successful early research degree, the Bachelor of Letters (see the U.N.E. Faculty of Arts Minutes, 1961-1963).

progressive course work in the first such year, and then with a thesis of some length to complete, one that had flowed on from both their Part A studies and the one-to-one researcher and his / her (potential) supervisor dialogues as only available in Armidale.)

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Enter the First Men's College as a defining and remarkably Potent Force for the Undergraduate Study of / research investigations into many aspects of Australian history and culture, and so for the broadest preparation for the future study / teaching of Australian—and, progressively,³¹ postgraduate—(often Comparative) Folklore

Both to cater for these intended-to-be-numerous part-time students—when in their periods of compulsory residence—and to attract as many full time students as possible to the decentralised and rurally-set, but easily accessible, university, there would soon—as after its autonomy from 1955—then there had begun there the as discussed compulsory collegiate system, with the first college to be built on campus,—one for many years for men only, to ‘live in’, as in term time—this being Wright College; and it was to be organised as a corporate body which had opened its doors on campus to ever increasing numbers of enrolled internals and some of the first and trial³² generation of the ‘externals’, from late February 1958.

Further, the ongoing University [men's] College,—one always open for some 51 weeks of the year -, would long be based on the University of Oxford system³³ with a very generous complement of student-available Resident and Non-Resident Fellows, all of them with both academic degree teaching duties³⁴ and also moral tutoring / career advising roles, all of them with academic tenure, the more senior non-resident Fellows also, in the initial period at least, all having very student- accessible daytime study offices right there on the College site—these offering small group

³¹ To date, higher degrees with a considerable folklore component—as in the field of research which relates / is related to: the U.S.A.; Scotland, Norway; the South Pacific Island Groups; and South East Africa and Japanese music, etc.—have been completed through the subject areas as taught more recently by the Schools of Arts and of the Humanities.

³² We are not concerned with the later semester, or trimester- systems, nor, of course, with online teaching and learning.

³³ Soon after he had been appointed as the first Master, H.W. Piper, had had a Carnegie Grant to investigate both current and long established Colleges, especially in the U.S.A., and draw on the experiences of his own postgraduate years at Madgalen College in Oxford, where he had been a Rhodes Scholar.

³⁴ It was intended that all external (i.e. by correspondence) students would be in residence for a compulsory period, usually a fortnight in the case of History units, and this period had daily lectures and numerous face-to-face tutorials of quite small groups. Similarly, for many years, all courses would be year-long in their duration. (Much later they would be of semester duration.)

teaching spaces³⁵ located throughout the first three residential Blocks of the College in 1958,³⁶ then also with the two more added by the beginning of the academic year, 1959. [By then, the buildings would accommodate the carefully planned number of some 189 students in that carefully structured blocks system for simultaneous integrated living and teaching for this residential community.]

And the cultural and identity-bestowing Arts' and Humanities' subjects were very much to the fore in the subjects preferred in fields in which these College and several other fully resident—academics³⁷ practised their disciplines professionally there, and this, as was said above, in an almost Oxbridge style.³⁸

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Australianists, early in Wright, and an ongoing and reaching out in their face to face (folk-content / folk-life) teaching

From its beginning, Wright College—its First Master, Professor Herbert W. Piper, being both a South Australian country boy from a quite isolated location of home nurture in the north of that state,—as well as also a former post-War Rhodes Scholar, as was said above —, and by now the Head of the U.N.E. Department of English,—would ensure that it would

³⁵ Because of the Belshaw fire, to 'teach in college—and so in groups of no more than four to six—had become a matter of necessity for a number of lecturers in the Faculty of Arts. There is some evidence, if it remains inconclusive, that these 1950s-to -mid -1960s arrangements were, later to be related to the even more Oxford-like York system of having whole academic departments put in the residential colleges, this, sadly, to slowly—and more generally—fall away in England from the imaginative concepts of the first year of the York style of integrated living and teaching fascinating the English universities at that time. See the references to (Dr) R.W. Clayton, below. Similarly, at the U.N.E., the practice slowly waned after the first decade or so, but the Resident Fellows, none of whom were in Pure Science, had sought to maintain a degree of daytime teaching of Internal Students, until at least the mid-1970s.

³⁶ Some five such blocks were functioning from the beginning of the autumn term in 1959, at which time the present writer, JSR, had joined this teaching body, in the numerically very strong discipline of English language and literature.

³⁷ Although it is an anticipation, we may note here the reference to R.B. Ward and his very powerful student contacts in Beta Block, of Wright College, as in *J.A.C.H.* vol 10, No 2 (2008), by J.S. Ryan, pp. 14, 15, and by former Wright College resident student Alan Grocott, *ibid.*, pp. 19, ff.

³⁸ It has often been noted that a like system has been practised / revived in recent decades at the University of York, in England, and it is fascinating that the recently retired Provost of the senior Men's College there, Dr Ronald Wallace. Clayton, was a student in the first intake into Wright College in Armidale, in 1958. (This situation has just been described in this present text.) However, the Wright system was soon to become uneven in practice, and not to be followed with quite the same degree of commitment, or social or academic success, in the various further-to-be-opened Armidale Campus Colleges. It is also a matter of some significance that Dr Clayton was a godson to R.B. Madgwick, with whom Clayton's father had had service contact during World War II, as through the Army Education Corps, of which RBM had been the Commanding Officer.

have a very strong and dynamic Faculty of Arts contingent—from the then abuilding University Departments of History and of English—in the Resident Members of the Senior Common Room, notably, from early on, the Australianist historians, Russel Ward (he also originally both schooled in South Australia, and a graduate of the University of Adelaide, but with an Australian National University Ph.D. supervised by Manning Clark), Robin B. Walker, the archivist-librarian Ray McDonald,³⁹ John Robertson, and then, in the next wave, the trained English language scholar and mediaevalist, and already an apprentice folklorist⁴⁰—John S. Ryan, who would quite soon be drawn into the teaching of Australian English speech, its phonetics and (most historic, and often Australian) lexis,⁴¹ as well as so much of the colonial period⁴² of Australian literature.⁴³

And women poets were on the main syllabus from the outset, not least because the eminent poet, Judith Wright,⁴⁴ was the daughter of the first Deputy Chancellor, and soon to become Chancellor Phillip Arundel Wright.

Very early, too, it should be noticed, internal Wright College students of the initial intake—and of much early evidenced researcher potential—had taken degree courses⁴⁵ variously related to social history / folkloristics, they including: Ronald W. Clayton, already a fine student of the history of

³⁹ He, as Archivist, was much engaged in locating, having deposited, and then himself curating historical papers, especially those with colonial and bush provenance. (He,—and his successors,—would collect for region, state, and national interests—much as still do the joint Federal-State-U.N.E. Archives office and centre, one conducted in the name of the U.N.E., but accessible to all, in the (small) city of Armidale, New South Wales.

⁴⁰ Appointed to U.N.E. in 1958,—as from the University of Nottingham, where he had also had residential system experience, linked with English language as a second language duties—he would only arrive in Armidale and immediately move into Wright College—in early 1959. His earliest scholarly publications with this sort of content would be for the Folklore Society in London, and then concerned with Koori (Aboriginal) traditional culture, and appearing in *Oceania*, or, as earlier, in his writing for the leading Otago (provincial) and Dunedin daily press, as an extension activity, back in his native Dunedin, in southern New Zealand.

⁴¹ Much of this would appear in *Oceania*, as for native Australian languages of north east New South Wales, or in *Orbis* (issued from Leuven) for Australian native lexis as incorporated into/ modified by Australian English.

⁴² This is usually defined as from c.1788 to 1901, and that the year of Federation.

⁴³ This development had been particularly primed by the giving of the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures by the eminent poet Judith Wright, she the daughter of the then Deputy Chancellor, P.A. Wright, the man after whom Wright College had been named. The course offering this, English II / III B, would prepare considerable numbers for the post graduate qualification of the Litt. B., one which would, duly be renamed as the Master of Letters (M. Litt.) . See some of this lecture material by Judith Wright, quoted in some detail, as in *Australian Folklore* 30.

⁴⁴ Some of the teaching notes that she provided for her lectures were to be included in *Australian Folklore* 30 (2015), pp. 103-148.

⁴⁵ An interesting example here would be Hugh Crago, he originally going on to Merton College, Oxford for mediaeval studies, but turning to the more therapeutic aspects of story and storytelling for the (disturbed) youth, especially in metropolitan and more adjacent regions of central New South Wales. He would so teach for a number of years at the University of Western Sydney.

ideas (he, later, to spend almost all his professional life at / become the longtime, resident and hugely influential Provost of the reaching and research subjects-based Langwith College at the University of York, in the United Kingdom); Ken McNab (later an eminent Australianist, first



researching at the University of Sussex, and then at that of Sydney, and eminent in Peace and Conflict Studies, and he to become son-in-law to Russel Ward); Peter Drysdale, later Professor of Economics, an O.A. winner, and a very significant East Asia / China specialist at the Australian National University, in Canberra .

Figure 3. A portrait of Judith Wright.

Another significant early Wright student historian who would turn to the more political / societal aspect of Australian studies, was to be one Donald Aitken,⁴⁶ he also to achieve a long and distinguished career in the two Canberra Universities-to-be, after his speedy elevation to a (and his own) first professorship at the then even more recently founded Macquarie University (in Sydney). The members of this early UNE group were to be clearly identified, if engagingly colloquially,—as were, similarly, others trained in like fashion later,—as ‘the sons of Russel’.

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⁴⁶ D. Aitken’s further career is outlined in the present main Wright writers’ section, in the folio-style book, *Wright for New England* (Armidale: University of New England, 2016).

And what of their more creative writing student contemporaries?

Not quite in tandem with the above were, coming through the College's student ranks, such significant thinkers and writers as: the Australian social and political historian and Australian poet and convention-challenging country-descended-and-nurtured writer, Geoff Page⁴⁷—he particularly to be remembered for his presenting so memorably to his readers the terrible cost of war—notably of World War I—and showing it as it impacts on the home communities;⁴⁸ and that time produced many another significant associate of the College, such as the elsewhere referred to perceptive and reflective sports writer and the merited winner of various prestigious national press awards, Roy Masters, O.A.M.—and that category of Wright-associated visitor and eminently communicative penmen even including a shorter term visiting lecturer in adult education, the Roman Catholic ex-seminarian by then become colourful and controversial novelist, Thomas Keneally, whose fictions contain much Australian (regional) folk history, as well impressionistic material about the impact of their history/cultural university studies at New England on the further lives of gauche and Kempsey area born 'country kids'.

The latter creative writer would mine the very same academic community and aspects of its members' studies and life stories for his own apparently total fictions, such as his *Victim of the Aurora*, or his deft handling of a piece of the Aboriginal resistance folklore of Northern New South Wales as in the bloody events of the Native Protest gesture of 1900, or, 'the meaning of the legends' of Jimmie Governor, Keneally pondering these in his seeming fiction, but powerful interpreting of racial clash in the closely detailed 'novel', *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.⁴⁹

The flavour of the potent thought riches within this same generously supported history-exploring and largely male internal College student community was neatly caught in the accounts of writers who had studied in the college in the relevant and shorter essays collecting up work,⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 46-47. One may also read the recollections of Geoff Page on his own peculiarly mind set formative study milieu on pp. 47-48 of J.S. Ryan's *Wright on Education* (2006).

⁴⁸ This is particularly the case in his homefront and powerful World War I period text, *Benton's Conviction*. The book is largely set in / near Guyra, to the nearer north of Armidale, and in a Sydney in the throes of the Conscription issue and the socialist views on the reasons for the waging of that same nation-rending war.

⁴⁹ The Keneally penchant for depicting the (limitations to the) lifestyle of the bush, both on the colonial frontier, and in the present are discussed in *Wright on Education* (*op. cit.*). Several of the members of the College would be associated with the making in New England of much of the related and to be internationally marketed film, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, as was Thomas Keneally himself. (See the small monograph by J.S. Ryan, *Thomas Keneally and Jimmie Blacksmith*.)

⁵⁰ It was to be assembled and edited by J.S. Ryan, and it interprets the development of story and lore in their prose / the not so fictional tales by Thomas Keneally, Gabrielle Lord, Epeli Hau'ofa, and others. The volume is entitled *Wright on Education: A Commemorative Miscellany*, and published in Armidale, N.S.W. by the University of New England in 2006,

Wright on Education (2006), in the chapter, ‘History, Historians and the many Wright College Shapers of New England’s and Australia’s Self-Perception’. There—and so also, and earlier in other publications,—it was to be made very clear that the pattern of needs, persons and intellectual and teaching opportunities, was to be an extraordinary instance of time, place and the particular personnel then teaching colonial history, all of these then combining to endeavour to capture the often fading local settler stories and so put onto paper more regional legends, and, in that process, to so vitalise the still very uneven and much less sophisticated field of Australian folklore research in more rural New South Wales. All this would result in linked / explorative new and significant publications by Wright’s cluster of the several—and to be variously resident there—distinctive creative writers. One of these, the Malaysian student and leaders of the Overseas Students’ Association, Soo Hay Khoo, appears elsewhere in this collection.

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*With another base, from a journal and an editor, to an international outreach with the early Wright College folkloric ethos ‘shining through’*⁵¹

Similarly, in another sympathetic and colonialism-exploring and folklore-like outreach, the College life style and its distinctly different and enterprising residential community would long be working to support and train the South Pacific folklorist- to- be, the young Tongan Epeli Hau’ofa,⁵² who would study undergraduate courses much as discussed above, and then take Honours-level (Australian) History at U.N.E. with R.B. Ward and E.J. Tapp, and would, duly, produce a Ph.D. thesis [for the Australian National University] on the impact of massive changes to the traditional culture and beliefs in an hitherto isolated village to the nearer west of Port Moresby, the capital of the Australian half of New Guinea. And there J.S. Ryan, one of his earlier teachers of English literature and language when they were both living in the same Block, Alpha, in Wright College in the early 1960s, was to be able to talk much about the latter’s firming notions of the place of Folklore in his, by then, three (competing) cultures with Epeli—when, in the early 1970s,—he, JSR, had been a Visitor Academic

for the Wright College Association and the Heads of Residence, U.N.E. Much of its text would be subsumed in the folio volume, one so generously illustrated, namely J.S. Ryan (ed.), *Wright for New England* (2016).

⁵¹ The reference here is to the College’s motto, ‘Let your Light Shine Through’.

⁵² While he was nurtured in New Guinea, where his father was stationed, and in New England in Australia, he was ethnically—and temperamentally,—Tongan. Much of his later academic career would be spent in Tonga—as historian adviser to the King—or Fiji, where he would finally be the Professor of Lore, Social Change, and Traditional Culture. See *Wright on Education*, and—in the later College volume, and which is also by the same writer, namely—*Wright for New England*, (2016), pp. 187ff.

in residence at the University of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby, where the Tongan, himself a son of the Methodist missions to his own earliest native land—New Guinea,—had become a part-time Tutor in Sociology, in the University there.

This highly significant posting was largely in the area of Rural and Modern Impacts / Irreversible Changes, for the younger generations, and so in their Sociology section in the early 1970s, at the same time as he was enrolled for a Ph.D. on a like topic through the Australian National University. (The same field of work would also be explored meaningfully through the U.N.E. in the second decade of the next century by the Indiana cultural historian, Dr Reggie Forrest, and one who would be able to compare in his research his experiences of the operation of race in a specific Carribean community, and to relate much of this to the evolving societies in Tasmania, both in the Convict period, and immediately thereafter. At the time of going to press, Dr Forrest is moving to an invited ideas post in regional mainland China.)

And Hau'ofa's own seemingly fictional writings which, although partly fictional stories in their genre, contain much astute observation and critical appraisal of both social welfare and academic practice in various parts of Polynesia, and they would, duly, have attracted to a very successful Ph.D. candidature at U.N.E. an American and comparative folklore researcher, the same Reggie Forrest, a portion of whose own illuminating—and nothing if not antipodean-insightful and folkloric—comparative research, as linked with the United States and the West Indies, as in his fine Ph.D. thesis, has earlier, and more recently (as in 2015)—been published in *Australian Folklore*.

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Yes, And Canada, too, glanced our way

Meanwhile, and earlier, in the late 1980s, too, there had been a Conference in the Library of U. N. E.'s later residential students' grouping, Austin College, for the [international] sharing with Australia of the probing of the by then so much more clearly defined / identified patterns of thought in the development of less Europe-concerned Canadian Studies—especially for period of the 19th century; and a large part of one afternoon had been carefully set aside by the Canadian academics then visiting, for a meeting at which they might meet, salute and then fete their heroic and very much Canadian universities-inspiring scholar for (folk) legend, for folkloric studies, and of 19th century colonial and timber work

balladry,⁵³ one Professor Russel B. Ward, of course, the longtime Fellow of Wright College.

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And so to the achieving of a soon then—and most effective and enduring—launching pad for the collection of Australian lore, especially that from the Australian ‘Bush’, and from its ‘colonial’ cities, up to 1914⁵⁴

It is now maintained—and it is a contention following on from the account of teaching developments, as just given,⁵⁵—that the University of New England, especially through members of its History Department / later Humanities’ School as living in Wright, as well as in some theoretical and comparative measure from the long time Department of English, and from among the first generation tertiary educated,—as from the long established and surprisingly well integrated and influential residential community with a broad range of ages, that this same Wright College,—had created—and achieved, albeit somewhat vicariously,—so much of the necessary folklore-sustaining ingredients for an environment and ambience most sympathetic to such nation—defining teaching and related researching purposes.

For the College Fellows—notably from the time of the first Dean, Dr Harry Heseltine (he already with both American and Australian folk music perspectives in his training and career, as in the Department of English in 1958-59),⁵⁶ as he was operating dramatically and serving as the Dean in Wright College at the time of its foundation in 1958, and the same time there then arriving and to long be present as a senior Fellow, Russel Ward, as from 1958 until later in the 1980s—had hosted a number of folklore based activities such as assisting the fine and so zestful folk musical, *Reedy River*,⁵⁷ or as had filled much of the cast for the 1960s then touring the

⁵³ These men were particularly frequently—in the mid-19th century—‘cedar-getters’ the men cutting out the timbers along the northern rivers, and the logs to be floated down stream and duly milled for the building the houses for Victorian Sydney. R.J. Smith of Lismore, and from *Australian Folklore*, would complete his Ph.D. on this area of work, and of distinctive Australian bush living and early timber ‘getting’ and working.

⁵⁴ In more recent decades, History—and, duly, Heritage—would be largely taught / researched in the School of the Humanities. And there was a period of several years in the 1980s, which would see the remarkable flourishing of the inter-disciplinary and then all faculties-involving ‘Heritage Futures Research Centre’ and it would produce the most comprehensive regional folklore-collection of essays- and also the similar e-book centred on especially colonial / rural New England, namely *High Lean Country*, as edited by Alan Atkinson, J.S. Ryan, and others.

⁵⁵ See above, pp. 101-ff.

⁵⁶ In effect, J.S. Ryan, recruited from the University of Nottingham in 1958, and arriving in Armidale in 1959, would take over many of the academic and outreaching cultural and outreaching tasks which had hitherto been performed by Dr H. P. Heseltine.

⁵⁷ This musical is much discussed in earlier issues concerned with the life and times of the late John Meredith. That especial issue of *Australian Folklore* has proved an almost national

period stage play, Douglas Stewart's *Ned Kelly*. These events had, of course, been well before the watershed national folklore conference held there,⁵⁸ early [24-25 November] in the long summer of 1990-1991, after Russel Ward had but recently been formally thanked—as at the Canadian gathering at Austin College—for his inspirational guidance to the collectors and interpreters of Canadian and other early North American work songs and like colonial balladry.

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But, quietly / steadily, the ongoing folklore work in that same College

Meanwhile, to return to Wright College, it must be noted that John Manifold, musicologist and ballad scholar, had already come into residence in the College a number of times in the 1960s and in several following summers,—in conjunction with the Department of Adult Education's drama and music schools,—during which he had performed many times, often during and after meals being taken in the hall, and he is still remembered for his animated discussion, if not quite [ideological] collision courses with Russel Ward. (Interestingly, both had been educated in a socially elevated grammar/ Anglo-English public school ambience, despite their both turning to Marxist thought and to a like personal political stance and often assertively leftist behaviour.)

And the two facets of these men were not always in synch when, as had happened when they were both present in Wright, they were playing to a gallery, a distinct penchant for the dramatic and attention-gaining being quite strong in both of them.

Further, there was then duly offered to both students taking non-degree credit, or extension courses, and a smattering of the regular residents of the College—a mix of performance, commentary, and seminar leadership in the fields of nineteenth century bush balladry and, his—Manifold's—spontaneous musical reprises—there the better to illustrate his recurring expositions on the by then fading in Australia but variously recalled British folk and traditional culture.

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favourite, according to the astonishing number of 'hits' that it has continued to achieve in the electronic tallies of ERA (Excellence in Research in Australia).

⁵⁸ The Conference time was one at which Dr Gwenda Davey and G. Seal were discussing and still commissioning articles for their edited publication, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993). In this same volume J.S. Ryan would advise on several possible authors for the work, in addition to contributing: bunyip (pp. 55a-56b); folk tales (pp. 177b-182); Hardy, Frank (pp. 206-212a); Legends (pp. 240a-242); names (pp. 291a-294a); Ryan, J.S. (p. 346b); and, variously, elsewhere.

Armidale researchers into Aboriginals / colonial ballads

And, similarly, and somewhat later, too, there would be various literary moments in the 1980s, involving the so very insightful student of bush ballads, Barry McDonald—who was then, and under the supervision of Russel Ward, still working on / was trying to trace / concerned with possible themes and harmonies that might well have crossed over from white settler story and song to perhaps nuance the performed music and his informants and friends' Aboriginal music / lore; he was working at that time on his bush ballads—focussed Ph.D. that would continue work / research connected with the bushranger, Fred Ward⁵⁹ / the man who, as in an unexpected highway hold-up, was able to move like a 'Thunder bolt'. (His illuminating thesis, as submitted, would have the final title: *You Can Dig All You Like, You'll Never Find Aboriginal Culture There. Relational Aspects of the History of the Aboriginal Music of New England, New South Wales, 1830-1930.*)

And by this time, and in the more formal teaching areas of the old Faculty of Arts, Alan Atkinson, the already mentioned later player on the scene, had been busy editing the hugely entertaining and colonial period-focussed, as well as atmospheric, serious academic journal, *The Push from the Bush* which was to morph into the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*.

Meanwhile, the decision,—one apparently taken after various consultations in both Melbourne and Canberra, as with the authorities of the National Library there—had been made to consider transferring at least a large part of the editorship of *Australian Folklore*—it then but recently begun, and issued from Curtin University in the far west,—to the eastern states and to do this, and so, after the Conference time organization and actual research presenting activities from 1989-90, it would come east, and to what was, relatively a very much folk-sympathetic university setting with so many mature adult students, and potential rurally based students for Australian folklore, and, in effect, with J.S. Ryan very soon to be operating as the new sole editor for the same national journal, after that date.

However, he would—relatively soon—be joined by Dr Robert James Smith, a long time external student and part time researcher into folkloric topics at the University of New England; and he was also to be someone who, and as of his later appointment to Southern Cross University in Lismore, from that base, would conduct patterned and Armidale-like regional research activities in the far North east corner of the state, in the

⁵⁹ Fred Ward (or Thunderbolt) would range the Hunter River country and basin, as well as the Tablelands, and so he was/ is particularly to be identified with the Colonial period of New England, at the end of the nineteenth century. For a study of the related film, as also referred to above, see the small monograph, J.S. Ryan, *Thomas Keneally and Jimmie Blacksmith*.

footsteps of the late Maurice Ryan, an earlier ‘external’ and double graduate in colonial literature and history from the University of New England, for the latter had, interestingly been supported in much of his regional work by Professor Charles Manning Clark⁶⁰ [he, Clark, earlier, acting as Russel Ward’s own supervisor of his *Ballad Origins*’ thesis],—they both being then based at the Australian National University.

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A nice piece of the utilising of some accessible and New England much earlier colonial practice—Research on the working and living style of an Original Pastoral Station, and one still worked in the traditional way

And at the same 4th National Folklore Conference, in November 1990, the hosting Wright College group of its academic staff humanities members⁶¹ had offered the delegates a very well-attended field trip to an early established (in the 1840s) working pastoral station, ‘Newholme’, at the foot of Mount Duval;⁶² and, at the same time, there was as well then available an optional and more demanding trip to the north east to the Pine Forest, where the Eastern Australian Universities teaching Old Norse culture had established a carefully assembled and as an authentic as possible mediaeval village, and had done all cooking and shelter in a style as fitted the highest standard of curatorial / museum knowledge as possible. Post graduates from both the Universities of Sydney and of Melbourne had been interested in this project. A significant liaison person here was to be the youthful Edward Bridle,—he later formally Dr E.M. Bridle,⁶³ Deputy Archivist for the State’s regional archives centred on Armidale—and a long time Norse scholar and already many years resident in Wright College, where he became President of the College’s Senior Common Room. [His patterns of research have gone with him to the University of Newcastle, where he has, for some time, been an Archivist of (more northern NSW)—and especially colonial period—Australiana.]

This same generous programme of field research excursions was one then especially devised for the Victorian and Western Australian visitors.

⁶⁰ The Library at the C.A.E., in Lismore, would be named for Manning Clark when the institution became autonomous, as the Southern Cross University.

⁶¹ J.S. Ryan—he also the historian of the Faculty of Rural Science—had liaised with it for many years over matters of the records. Another key figure here was the—to be—Dr Edward Bridle, a long-time resident / Senior Tutor of Wright College of the Armidale Archives Office. (Later he would transfer to the Archives Office of the University of Newcastle, as is noted above.)

⁶² See further ahead for details of this.

⁶³ *Ed.* Edward Bridle also introduced many others to the mediaeval village, including A. Asbjørn Jøn—who also spent a considerable amount of time at the village, and attended Wright College for Residential Schools while a part-time postgraduate student at U.N.E.

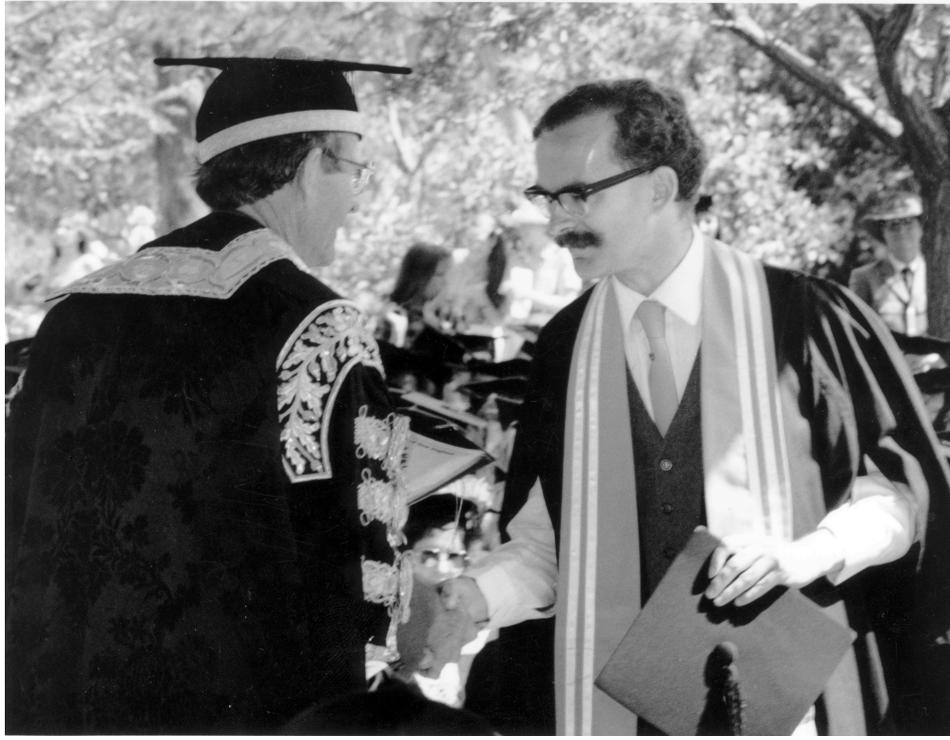


Figure 4. Edward Bridle at the 1992 Faculty of Arts Graduation Ceremony

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Meanwhile, the significant New England input into the soon to be Australian Folklore 'Bible'

Much less physically strenuous than that optional bush excursion activity was the indoor gathering, the Conference itself, its paper presentations—these, and edited by Margaret Clarke—duly issued in a 120 pages of foolscap *Proceedings of the 4th National Congress* (of the Australian Folk Trust, Inc., Civic), and various exhibitions of significant memorabilia were also happening in the spacious and wonderfully-sited and, by day, brilliantly lighted⁶⁴ Dining Hall of the already mentioned Wright College.

And during the Conference there were to be many discussions that would certainly prove helpful for / contribute to the shaping and promoting of so much of the development of Australian Folklore studies nationally

⁶⁴ In addition to the fine views from the Hall to the Creeklands to the north and east, there was a fine display of Wright Family Heraldry to the north, in stained glass, loftily positioned above the College's High Table.

for the next several decades,⁶⁵ as well as the effective transfer of the still very new and Curtin University-based national journal, *Australian Folklore*, to the east, in fact, to their Conference venue there, to Armidale, in regional New South Wales. Further, there were to be several occasions at which Gwenda Beed Davey (she still fresh from her years of pioneering Australian folklore teaching to younger school teachers at Monash University, in Melbourne) and Graham Seal—(from Curtin University to the west of Perth, and where he had, in effect, just recently founded the (initially) two tiny issues a year periodical *Australian Folklore*)—would be discussing the future most fruitfully with various members of the New England folk group / members of U.N.E. teaching staff of the then still styled, ‘Faculty of Arts’.

Several of them were already / soon then to be invited to contribute to the planned and, by then, well advanced ‘Companion to / for Australian Folklore’, writing up folkloric research to assist the just mentioned Melbourne-Curtin Universities’ [i.e. Davies and Seal] scholars’ projected plans for what would become what is still the most readable and definitive Australian and internationally recognised folklore publication from this country, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (1993).

These would include, amongst many catalysts to capturing and classifying Australian lore and its collectors and codifiers,—the following (and, duly, from Armidale) several commissioned items from J.S. Ryan, as on pertinent (Australia-relevant) perspectives on lore, on popular thought and folkloric performance, these resulting in his contributing, inter alia, the following and soon-accepted material to the *OCAF*:

- Bunyip (55a-56b);
- a subtle and important tracing of the recurring / nationally significant—and variously more emphasised—patterns and styles, as in *Australian Folk Tales* (177b-182b), this last being an effective overview piece moving from the classifications for world lore, as from Stith Thompson’s system, to folkloric recurring patterns as emerging—and pattern-forming—in Australia, and which the living conditions had confirmed in a fairly firm and recurring range of types;
- JR’s colleague, the story-teller, ‘Frank Hardy’⁶⁶ (206-212);
- the tightly argued section on legends (240a-242a); and,

⁶⁵ One of these would prove to be the offering to J.S. Ryan the editorship of *Australian Folklore*, a task in which he would, duly be joined by Dr Robert Smith of the Lismore-located Southern Cross University, and someone already having completed several degrees with so many of his periods of University of New England residence / supervision at / near the same Wright College.

⁶⁶ F. Hardy had lectured many times in U.N.E. in the latter part of the twentieth century, as well as being himself in residence for quite long periods as a guide and mentor in the ‘Writers’ Retreats’, these on scholarship for young/ fresh writers of real promise, and so working with J.S. Ryan.

- the so very nation-defining, the comprehensive—if necessarily succinct,—the onomastics survey⁶⁷ entitled ‘Names’ (291a—294a).

This last is a more generously proffered overview, one treating of the historical, the regional, the descriptive types, the sporting, the colloquial, the influence of theatre and of popular entertainment. Nicknames also feature, as do the pattern of the often personalised names as with *Grannies*, for Granny Smith apples, etc. Names for persons—in Australia, as elsewhere—have many colloquial forms, most of them being vehicles for folk speculation, prejudice or cultural reference, many of the ethnic sort being derogatory, while many of them have arisen in stories, these often derisory, sporting, or otherwise memorable. As the survey concludes, ‘Nomenclature is undoubtedly one of the most exuberant, inventive, cruelly shrewd and humorous aspects of both folk memory and folk imagination in the country.’ (p. 294) etc., etc.

And not forgetting (Australian) story patterning

In the oddly uneven (modest?) biographic snapshots given in the often tersely laconic reference work, there are to be found: Russel Ward (1914–),⁶⁸ p. 363, and John Sprott Ryan, (p. 346); while the last also contributed the somewhat skeletal but peculiarly significant—and definitive—section on the particular selection of the world archetypal story patterns those so much more favoured—and thus so much more likely to be encountered and significant—in Australian culture. We also have in the compendium various other Armidale-influenced items, e.g.:

- the more predictable narrative motif patterns to be found in Australian story;
- musical tunes, variously, and so linked motifs’ contributions from John Manifold,⁶⁹ he, as was said above, so often presenting, as guest lecturer / tutor at the University of New England, these

⁶⁷ It is pertinent to note here that J.S. Ryan had been for several decades the Australian National University -selected—and so Australian—official member of the International Council for Onomastic Sciences (I.C.O.S.) in Europe, and so, by then, representing the country at International Congresses in London, Louvain, Marburg, and Geneva, in particular. The last of these scholarly gatherings was one much concerned with standardising spellings, especially in the world of aerial navigation, to avoid possibilities of confusion / mid-air accidents.) However, etymology and landscape were / are always significant factors in both onomastics research and the variously assembled data recording of clusters of names, proper names, etc.

⁶⁸ There would be a special presentation volume of the journal, *Australian Folklore*, for Russel Ward at his eightieth birthday in 1994, with select social historians and folklorists coming from afar for the occasion, and many telegrams / congratulatory emails from around the nation.

⁶⁹ He would prove the link to bring to the college Ron Edwards (1930-2008), Australia’s most prolific collector and publisher of folk songs and yarns. His modest and yet so very engaging visit for the Russel Ward-opened New England Conference will long be remembered.

observations being much as / elaborated from those offered at / during summer music schools in the later 1960s, and 1970s, and when he fascinated by his probing the differences in example to illustrate a / almost the identical viewpoint, as between the British folk tales and their Australian equivalents; or

- writing motif discussions, as with the ones most felt to be comfortable to the Australians born, this from Frank Hardy, the Marxist story teller and Writers' Retreat tutor to the various summer vacation writing scholarship holders, these already Armidale—familiar from when he, F.H., had been mentoring at various residential seminars, and / or Australia Council-subsidised seminars for the very promising in these group 'Writers' Retreats'; etc., etc.

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Armidale, in November 1990 and the emerging Companion

In short, it could well be said that *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* had received much of its general content and much firming of its general and by then nearing-publication policy—and so much of its own authority as a reference work—from the many discussions during the first assemblage of folklorists, to be so rurally set, here, in Armidale, in New England, in this first non-capital city Eastern Australia National Conference. And a quiet observer who, in a measure, then came to life towards the end of the gathering there was to be the collector and brave publisher of so much freshly collected and codified lore—from far north Queensland, Ron Edwards (see p. 106), he still very much the self-publisher and inspirational folklore collector, a man who had come, as he said, to find out 'what the other bs. were up to.'

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And ever aware of the traditional bush workplace

Also of note from the Conference was the already mentioned engrossing field-trip⁷⁰ to Newholme, a pastoral station in operation late in the age of transportation—and now also a Study Centre to observe contemporary rural men and women at work—at the north end of the campus, and one in continuous bush husbandry practical use from the 1840s, it sheltering, on the south side, at the foot of Mt Duval, and

⁷⁰ It was made possible by the Conference being held over a long weekend, and so delegates had that much more opportunity to absorb the setting, one of the most pastoral and historically authentic, as ever offered for any such significant gathering.

preserving all the original yards and itinerant workers' living facilities in good working order; and the commentary provided by (the now late) Dr John Ferry,—himself a former bush teacher from west of Inverell, and then a fairly recently appointed U.N.E. Lecturer in Heritage Studies,⁷¹—was a form of unobtrusive folk-experience and authentic re-enactment work practices, and one much enjoyed by the delegates.

(A minor and optional excursion of the Seminar was also able to be taken by various empathetic delegates to the Viking Village, at that time a nationally maintained camping site, to the north east of central Armidale location, and one which had, for a number of years, and—with University of New England interest and a number of student and graduate volunteer supporters—housed / acted as a field study—Viking-like live in centre for the (serious) students of Viking lifestyle who had come from all the universities of Eastern Australia wherein Viking Studies were then offered. (Dr.) E. M. Bridle,⁷² the locally trained mediaevalist and archivist from the University of New England, had assisted here, and in the next few years, before his subsequent move to responsibility for certain Archival matters at the University of Newcastle.)

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Obiter Dicta—connected with / flowing from the 1990 Armidale Conference

The 1990 Conference and the memory of Russel Ward apart,—for he, already in quite obvious ill health, had passed away fairly soon after this gathering—Wright College had had many more folkloric thinking occasions over the years, notably: leftist / socialist dialogues with the Union Leader, Jack Munday, at the long unions' / residential managerial relations seminars; etc., etc. And it is worth noting that, over a number of years, Jack Munday had come to catch odd rallies in the north, several times staying in the Guest Room in Gamma Block and expounding to his listeners in the College on Builders' Labourers issues, but also with various views on the nineteenth century, and, fascinatingly, the nature of life in Sydney's early sailing ships' / marine precinct.

⁷¹ From that point on there have been— (a) the Heritage Futures Research Centre, a body drawing its members from all faculties and disciplines; and (b) Heritage units taught within Australian History, notably by Dr Andrew Piper, a trained archaeologist with experience in the south west Pacific, at Port Arthur (Tasmania), [see elsewhere in this present issue]— and in various parts of colonial sites, still relatively undisturbed, in N.S.W.

⁷² A country boy from the far west, and—early on—a mediaevalist by training and doctoral thesis, and very much later to be President of the last Old Wright College Senior Common Room, he has had a professional career as an Australianist Archivist, first for the University of New England, and then for Newcastle University (in New South Wales).

And then, too, there was the matter of his living at Milson's Point, in old Sydney, so near the home of The Push, The Rocks, where he had had a base for observation of the passing of the Rocks not always regretted member of the Push / maritime and inner city labouring worker—he in the path of the developer—and so Jack had commented on that culture-destroying collision scene, as of the workers still living in terrace houses there—as over a number of years from the later 1960s on.

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Plus some other intriguing University/ Wright College Guests and Ideas Contributors

And the same men's college having for long the just mentioned and most suitable and western facing and warm Guest Room on the campus, would, if we may anticipate, host such folklore—and (bush) culture-conscious figures as: C.D. Narasimaiah, a most perceptive professor [of British Empire—generated literature] from Sri Lanka—he, in about 1962, visiting to absorb the background to the poetry and family chronicle writing and bush setting / thinking of Judith Wright, the then Chancellor's daughter, and renowned poet, much of which would soon appear in his widely / Pacific Rim circulating book,⁷³ *An Introduction to Australian Literature*, the first version of which was to be planned for its possible and more suitable/ appropriate contents with the present writer; or, one recalls another, and perhaps even less likely visitor,—an observer of / for the Roman Catholic Church and of its then place and significance in colonial and later Australian life, Professor the Rev. Father Siston, from the Royal University of Malta. His concern had been with the values, spiritual, as well as social—as held by the contemporary Australian student, of whatever denomination, or even when he had none at all. Wright had been deemed a likely prism, and one where many views could identified, not least for their differences from his experiences in Italy.

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Our man come back, once again, to savour his roots

However, perhaps the most interesting of these very open-minded thinkers and colonial culture comparativists—as then reflecting on the British and the Australian societies and their mores / attitudes from the 1960s—would be (Professor / Dr.) Max Hartwell, once a Glen Innes boy

⁷³ This text—one on which several of the New England academics already mentioned had acted as advisers—would have an Australian edition, as well as it circulating widely as both reference work and teaching guide throughout the Indian sub-Continent.

who was by then an illustrious supervisor of research scholars in the field of [Comparative] Economic History⁷⁴ at—and through—Nuffield, College, within the University of Oxford; and he was, of course, someone who had started his academic career when he had been an internal student of the then New England University College, as it was then styled, living in the first micro-community of almost all first generation university students in the old colonial homestead, now the University College's Main Building, 'Boooloominbah', during the time of World War II. Indeed, the later P.A. Wright, as Chancellor, had endeavored to get Hartwell back to U.N.E. as Vice-Chancellor, in 1965, when Dr Madgwick's notice of intention to resign had been made known.

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The concluding 'Part Two' of this article will appear in the 2017 edition of *Australian Folklore*.

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⁷⁴ Although the more challenging and reformist term 'political economy' was not then used, much of R.M. Hartwell's thinking was in that direction.

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