

Editorial

It is with pleasure that we present this volume for 2016. Although delayed, readers may be pleased to know that the issue for 2017 will soon follow. Changes and streamlining of preparation processes have permitted much of the two volumes to be completed in parallel. While resulting in an unfortunate delay for this current volume, it is intended that establishing these processes may lead to more efficient workflow ahead and so to a more sustainable journal.

This volume continues as a longer-term record of significant Australian folklore and folklorists. Inevitably this means giving note to the passing of major figures, and it is with particular sadness that we note the passing of Brian Dunnett. As well as offering several tributes to the man and his work, this sad event also gives cause to revisit those railway work-based communities and the folklore which sustained them.

Our attention to the international context continues in this volume with a sustained focus upon Pitcairn Island. From its early history, based on romance and rebellion, then experiencing long isolation, and some violence, Pitcairn Island emerges with the characteristics of a small and tightly inter-connected community. Also reflecting our awareness of our adjoining neighbours, New Zealand and Indonesia are represented by articles which engage in an informative and detailed way with contestations that operate within their cultural discourses. More broadly then, the journal brings notice of developments in journals/ societies in Asia, the United States and the United Kingdom.

As in several recent issues, some attention is given to J.R.R. Tolkien, this justified by his now global impact as a myth-maker. As the cultural echoes of these myths continue to intrigue, so we present A. Asbjørn Jøn's 'J.R.R. Tolkien's Cult of Gandalf as a Literary Memory, or Reflection, of Ancient Germanic Spiritual Symbolism and the Cult of Odin'. Attention to Tolkien the man appears elsewhere in the issue, including an image (p. 202).

Despite this international awareness, the core focus of this journal is upon matters Australian. Two retrospective pieces consider Australia in the past. In reprinting Ian Turner's earlier survey of folklore in Australia we bring attention to the longer tradition, the insights, struggles and commitment of those figures. The second retrospective piece is a consideration of the life of publisher Frank Eyre (1910-1988).

Several items have a focus upon memoir, whether in sections or in the whole approach. Here memoir is shown for its passionate commitment to some key aspect of the past and where there is a broader community interest at stake. Accompanied by close supportive detail, these memoir items reveal long-term patterns of engagement and service. Such patterns

are of the sort which have sustained Australians' engagement with their land and institutions, and here thrown into highlight by their being confronted by increasing managerialism, marketisation and withdrawal of services.

Yet changes also bring opportunities and the journal has been assessing the possible benefits of these for some years. Hitherto the journal has been made available solely in hardcopy format, while discipline-leading journals such as *Folklore* and *Journal of American Folklore* have long had the additional benefit of digital distribution. It is with pleasure then that we can announce the electronic availability of *Australian Folklore*, through the services of scholarly publisher Kvasir.¹ According to James Leary, former Editor of *Journal of American Folklore*, our '*Australian Folklore* has come of age as a journal of national **and** international significance.'² This now increased distribution means that the journal's significant work may have more impact—as is deserved by the efforts of its many contributors, reviewers and all involved.

Such possibilities do not happen without the benefit of a well-established and respected journal, which represents many years of insightful work. Nor would this particular issue of the journal have emerged without the indefatigable efforts of A. Asbjørn Jøn and of Mark Gregory. To them we offer our strongest acknowledgements at this time of change.

Robert James Smith for the Editors

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Australian Folklore wishes once again to acknowledge the invaluable cooperation of many cultural organisations, libraries and individuals, including: the executive of the Australian Folklore Association, as well as several similar bodies in North America and in the United Kingdom; the various referees consulted; and to innumerable workers in the Australian field for many acts of reference and information. Similarly we thank the Australian and overseas indexing and subscription agencies who serve our discipline so well.

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¹ See <http://journals.kvasirpublishing.com/af/issue/view/27>

² James P. Leary, 'Australian Folklore: An American Folklorist's Appraisal', *Tradition Today*, 2 (2012), 78-81 (p. 81). Bold text is as presented in the original.