

*Australian Folklore Association*



AUSTRALIAN FOLKLORE

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*Australian Folklore* is the journal of the Australian Folklore Association, Inc. It is published yearly in the Southern Hemisphere Spring, i.e. in August/September. Prices and details of back issues available are listed inside the back cover.

*Australian Folklore* is a peer-reviewed journal, maintaining its high quality through the engagement of Australian research with the global research community. It has long been listed by the Modern Language Association, and many papers from it cited in the MLA's selective *Annual Bibliography* and indices. A similar treatment is accorded by the Modern Humanities Research Association in its *ABELL*, both in its Traditional Culture and other appropriate sections. In Australia, it is an ERA-listed journal.

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*Australian Folklore* has its own site on the World Wide Web. Its purpose is to broaden knowledge of and access to Australian folklore. As well as containing information regarding the most recent editions of the journal, the web-pages offer a list of other major folklore publications in English. The Internet address is:

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# Australian Folklore

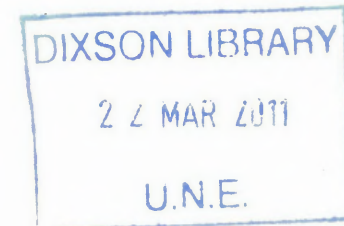
# Australian Folklore

A Yearly Journal of Folklore Studies

A Celebratory Issue, Featuring Contents of Nos. 1–25,  
Film, Industrial and Local Lore

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*Scenes from Burrumarra's life, including map centred on Elcho Island, NT*

## Editorial

### The Australian Folklore Association Inc.

The history of the Association and of its taking over of the journal, *Australian Folklore*, are set out, together with the Association's Constitution, in *Journal* No. 7 (1992), pp. 151–160. Apart from its *Newsletters* and the meetings of its Executive, it has gained representation on the Board of the Australian Folk Trust Inc., which is also a co-sponsor of its (inter-) national conferences. More recently it has collaborated with various Australian universities in publication and conference activities, as well as with the Victorian Folklife Association. It has also had much dialogue with folklore scholars and academics worldwide.

The earlier activities of the Association are also given, in outline, in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore*, ed. by Gwenda Beed Davey and Graham Seal (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 27–28.

The Australian Folklore Association exists for the purposes outlined in its Constitution (given in *Australian Folklore* No. 7, 1992 on pp. 155–160). Applications for membership, subscriptions to the Association, etc., should be sent to the Secretary (address below).

### Australian Folklore Association, Inc.

President: Professor Kamal Puri, T.C. Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Qld 4072.

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Editor: J.S. Ryan, English Discipline, School of Arts, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351.

Co-Editor: Robert James Smith (address above).

Production Assistance: staff of the U.N.E. Printery.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Progress and Progression in our Folklore Discipline since 1945*

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

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

Of course, all folk and folklorists are essentially listeners and observers, aware of human nature, as well as the inexplicable and elusive ‘Other’, as well as for social order and justice. And thus it is that so many of those collectors in this country are also very well known as Australia-focussed writers, the best known represented in our journal constitute a compassionate canon, starting with ‘Rolf Boldrewood’—the pen-name of T.A. Browne, in the gold rushes, and continuing down to the well remembered, the late Bill Scott, the late Patricia Wrightson, Les Murray, or Peter Skrzynecki, all fine scholars and acute observers of the nation’s cultural and so often ‘multicultural’ experiences.

#### *Our Internationals on/ for recording the Australian Folklore Scene*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *The National 'Language', Passing, Acquired, Colloquial*

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

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

\*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

\* \*

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

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## Tributes: *Australian Folklore* Nos. 1–25

Dear Professor Ryan

As President of The Folklore Society [UK], I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the editors of *Australian Folklore* on the publication of the silver jubilee 25th annual volume of this distinguished scholarly journal.

1987 was a good year for folklore studies in Australia. The government's Committee of Enquiry into Folklife published its report *Folklife: Our Living Heritage*. The Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education produced its report *Windows Onto Worlds*. And the first volume of *Australian Folklore* was published by the Centre for Australian Studies, Western Australia Institute of Technology, thanks to funding from the Australian Folk Trust. Its first editors were Graham Seal, currently Professor of Folklore at CAS, Curtin University of Technology, and David S. Hulst—both authors of internationally acclaimed publications on Australian folklore.

Since 1993, *Australian Folklore* has been published as the journal of the Australian Folklore Association under the editorship of Professor John S. Ryan, Dept of English, University of New England, who has expertly ensured the journal's continuous high standard of scholarship and wide diversity of subjects covered.

An advertisement for volume 1 of *Australian Folklore* promised that the aims of the journal were to: 'publish research, fieldwork, analysis and other matters relevant to Australian folklore; [...] provide a forum for new work in Australian folklore and [...] provide a focus for the continued development of folklore studies in this country; [and] relate to all aspects of Australian folklore, with a particular emphasis on the folklore process in contemporary Australian experience.' (*Folklore* [UK] vol. 97, 1986). Everything promised then has been delivered, and much more besides. The journal has maintained a consistent engagement with developments in theory, both folkloristic and anthropological, and has fulfilled the primary aims of the Australian Folklore Association: 'to promote the collection, preservation and study of folklore in Australia; to foster the discussion and dissemination of information about folklore in Australia; and to promote understanding and appreciation of the



important social and cultural role of folklore in Australian society' (<http://members.iinet.net.au/~cknow/AFA.html>)

We wish the editors of *Australian Folklore* every success with the next 25 volumes.

Dr Eddie Cass

President, The Folklore Society [UK]

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### ***Australian Folklore: The First 25 Years***

Professor John D. Widdowson

Centre for English Traditional Heritage

The international journal *Australian Folklore* began life in 1987 when the first issue, edited by Graham Seal and David S. Hulst, was published by the Centre for Australian Studies at Curtin University of Technology, Perth. This first issue contained articles on a wide range of subjects, including the folklore of women, well-dressing in Perth, Italian traditional music in Adelaide, and folkloristic and media responses to the disappearances of baby Azaria Chamberlain near Ayers Rock. These articles were followed by reports on the national folklore conference at Sydney in 1986, notes and queries on a variety of topics such as trick-or-treat in the USA (just beginning to be found in the Perth area), early Australian terms of (dis)approval, 'sick' jokes, and Cabbage Patch dolls. There were notices of recent and upcoming publications, events, and folklore studies courses, and a notice of intention to publish an ongoing register of both Australian and overseas folklore fieldwork and research.

No. 1 set the tone, style, standard, and pattern for subsequent issues in a total of 147 pages for the modest price of an individual subscription at Aus\$20. In the same year a Bulletin with the same title was also published, which included reviews, notes and queries, etc.

No. 2 comprised mostly unsolicited contributions, showing an encouraging development from No. 1 which had been primarily written by the editors and a small group of scholars and writers. Again we find a very wide range of articles, including those on childlore, the myth of Lemuria, contemporary folklore and racism, the belief that dogs can be deterred from fouling gardens by bottles half-filled with water, and a perceptive overview by Hugh Anderson of the problems faced by folklorists in the collection, conservation, and utilisation of material. A second Bulletin was also published, which was notable for responses by six of the country's leading folklorists to the Inquiry into Folklife in Australia—a theme taken up again in No. 3 along with articles on Irish outlaws, contemporary legend, folklore and ethnic groups in Australia, and the Australian folk club music.

Nos. 4 to 6 were characterised by a similar wide variety of articles in issues of a similar length, which continued to establish the preferred format and consistency of approach. Volume 7 welcomed a new editor, J.S. Ryan, and was published for the Australian Folklore Association by the University of New England, Armidale. The journal acquired a new look, including the now distinctive cover and logo. It was slightly larger than A5 in size, but maintained the broad scope of content, including aboriginal folklore and in this issue predominantly Australian topics, plus a wide range of notes, comments, reviews, etc.

The same format is firmly established in Nos. 8 and 9. No. 9 includes an important editorial statement of the remit of the journal: 'This issue of *Australian Folklore* follows the editorial policy of No. 8 (1993) in endeavouring to publish the work of as wide as possible a range of scholars, collectors and experts in particular aspects of the vast field of Australian folkloric studies'. The issue is dedicated to the eminent historian, Russel Braddock Ward, and differs from its predecessors in grouping contributions by themes such as the Republican Controversy, Perspectives From Overseas, Memory Pieces, and Articles, and is noticeably more substantial, extending to 212 pages.

The editorial in No. 10 reiterates the policy stated in No. 9, but significantly adds: 'As well as both theoretical and field studies by scholars throughout the world'. These policy statements make it clear that the editor fully intends to continue and indeed extend the innovatively holistic approach to the subject advocated by his predecessors. This issue, dedicated to Bill Wannan, is appropriately predominated by contributions from Australia and includes tributes to and letters from the dedicatee. No. 11 (1996) commemorates the folksong collector and performer, Alan Scott, and is dedicated to the

writer Dal Stevens. The celebration of the life and work of distinguished Australians, whether folklorists or those working in related fields, soon became a regular feature of the journal.

No. 12 focuses on bush songs, culture, survival and the global threat, folklore of work, the lore of sport, the charting of Australian folklore, and contemporary film. This issue extends to 320 pages.

The grouping of contributions by theme continues in Nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, each of which incorporates between thirty and forty longer contributions. The modest increase in subscription of Aus\$5 for No. 17 (2002) reflects the increased size and publication costs. The editor invariably acknowledges the support of many Australian organisations and institutions and in particular the Australian Folklore Society. No. 18 includes eight comparative and international essays, and nine Australian essays and studies. Nos. 19 and 20 explore new writing and publishing and ways of transmitting story.

The twenty first anniversary issue in 2006 centres on studies in Australian folklore, including food and foodways, but as usual also features major international theoretical and comparative essays. No. 21 also acknowledges the invaluable assistance of Dr. Robert J. Smith of Southern Cross University in preceding issues of the journal— assistance which is formally recognised by his appointment as Co-editor. No. 22 celebrates the work of eminent Australian folklorists, including an important rallying call by Ann Trindade in support of folklore as an academic discipline. Nine papers follow in the firmly established category of international theoretical and comparative studies, and these are followed by three papers on Australian mining and nine on a variety of aspects of Australian folklore.

No. 23 pays tribute to Ron Edwards and other Australian folklorists and collectors, and includes sections on Australian folklore, both in general and in schools, together with five articles on comparative international perspectives on traditional cultural matters. No. 24 (2009—the year immediately preceding the journal's Silver Anniversary) features folk music and cultural change, with particular emphasis on satire and heritage.

Since taking over the editorship of the journal some eighteen years ago, John Ryan has consolidated and greatly extended the challenging remit of his pioneering predecessors, in developing what is now one of the most substantial and respected journals in the subject area. In addition to broadening the scope of the journal to encompass the widest and most comprehensive range of tradition studies, revealing the relationships between these studies and many

others in the social sciences and humanities, he has moulded the publication not only to draw attention to the rich traditional heritage of Australia, but also to enable it to take its rightful place in the canon of international scholarship in this important field. His vision, erudition, and boundless enthusiasm for the subject are evident in each issue he has edited, not least in his own editorials and in the numerous articles and other contributions he has made to the journal. With the notable assistance in recent years of his Co-editor, Robert Smith, he has steered the journal on a steady and determined course to the benefit of all those with an interest in the study of tradition. Above all he has striven to make Australian folklore accessible to layman and scholar alike—an achievement which is central to the journal's success and to its enviable reputation both at home and abroad. Collectively the journal espouses an essentially humanitarian mission to reveal the social, cultural, political, and personal relevance of tradition and of the study of tradition in the contemporary world.

Over the past twenty five years *Australian Folklore* has firmly established itself as one of the leading international journals in this diverse and diffuse discipline, which in itself is a remarkable achievement. Its adventurous and comprehensive approach, which is amply demonstrated even in this brief overview, has helped to broaden and redefine the boundaries of the subject, linking both tangible and intangible cultural heritage with history, literature, ecology, and worldview. It offers a challenging and innovative model for new and developing journals in this field, and for future teaching, research in, and practical applications of, the study of tradition in all its manifestations. Here's to the next 25 years!

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