

Chapter One

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY PROVISION OF, AND BACKGROUND TO, MODERN ADULT EDUCATION IN THE NEW ENGLAND REGION¹

Those Mechanics' Institutes/Schools of Arts and their Eclipse

Prior to the establishment of a full-time adult education officer at the New England University College in 1948, it can be said that the adult learning provision on the New England Tablelands and for the surrounding areas was piecemeal and not always seen for what it was, a series of volunteer organizations endeavouring to successively assist the various educative wants of the general northern society, particularly the working class, in the realm of what may be termed 'useful knowledge'. In 1826 the Statutes of the Church and Schools Corporation had proposed the provision in Sydney of 'Mechanics' Institutions,² the better to meet the various 'wants of the colony', the Sydney Mechanics' School of the Arts being founded³ in January 1833, and by 1851 many like institutes⁴ had appeared in the bush. Thus the Tamworth⁵ Mechanics Institute had been established as early as 1856, while, in Armidale, 1859 had seen both the founding of the first institution and its change of name to the School of Arts. Many other

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1. In this survey it is assumed that 'New England' means a loosely defined northern region of New South Wales, in some measure centred on Armidale but variously, extending much further afield, as in C.V. Thompson's 1924 evidence to the Minister on tertiary education in Northern New South Wales. See D. Drummond, *A University is Born* (1959), p. 7.
 2. See Alan Barcan, *A Short History of Education in New South Wales: A Survey ... from 1788 to 1965* (1965).
 3. A convenient account of this and related events in the 19th century is to be found in Derek Whitelock, *The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia* (1974), chapter 3.
 4. See the various similar 'literary and scientific associations' discussed in W.H. Wells, *A Geographical Dictionary or Gazetteer of the Australian Colonies, 1848 (passim)*. Dates for such 'foundings' are difficult to establish since some have several different 'commencement' dates - (i) the plan ratified by public meeting; (ii) the functioning as a Mechanics' Institute; (iii) the common renaming as a School of Arts; followed by (iv) in 1912, the necessary renaming as 'Literary Institute' in order to qualify for the N.S.W. Government grant.
 5. Later (in 1866) moving to the Brisbane street site, which is today the University of New England's Continuing Education Office. (See R. Millis, *City on the Peel, A History of Tamworth and District*, p. 125).

northern centres had founded Schools of Arts about this period, such as Tenterfield (1860), and Hillgrove (1891) on the Tablelands, or Inverell (1867) on the slopes, or Grafton (1870) on the coast.

Yet it was long the case that the thrust of these instructional institutions was semi-private and they failed to attract the 'mechanic' or working man, being dominated by the middle class. Also they were very little aware of the agricultural needs of the colony. In 1880 the Public Instruction Act, Vic. No. 23, passed by Sir Henry Parkes, established a National System of Education, and that period perhaps saw the beginning of the slow eclipse of the Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts, in part because their model and syllabus of instruction was largely British and urban. As David Drummond would observe much later of New England in particular:

A by-product of that period was a firmly held belief in certain quarters that neither in art, culture, education, or manufacture, could any good thing come out of Australia. (D.H. Drummond, 'The Changing Tides of Education', *A.D.H.S.J. & P.*, Vol. 2 (1961), pp. 3-4.)

Meanwhile, moves in the Church of England led to the local foundation in Armidale in 1898 of St. John's College for Anglican theology students, the further north's first institution of a form of tertiary education. It is clear that the Institutes had, however, many useful functions: the provision of libraries,⁶ as centres for public meetings and democratic free speech; and, in due course, as providers of some information and discussion of the changes from a pastoral (frontier) society to one concerned with local industry, commerce, public services and technological matters.

Again in his retrospect of 1961, Drummond would refer (*ibid.*) to the various potential changes from 1914 in the field of school and adult education, 'in a predominantly rural economy, with a slowly increasing bias to secondary industry'. Yet in the 15 years after World War I New South Wales would see a 37% increase in public school enrolment, and, by 1927, there was a steady expansion of non-metropolitan school facilities, with the decentralized Armidale Teachers' College building commencing in 1928. Despite the ridicule which greeted it, this was a new and exciting 'intrusion into the established order of centralised education' (Drummond, *loc. cit.*, p. 5). Further, in that 1961 retrospective glance, the same man, State Minister for Education from 1927 to 1941, would see as continuing in that period: necessary modification of the highly centralized educational

6. A concern for a strong public library in Armidale would be one of Arnold Eberle's prime concern in 1948. See p. 202 of J.S. Ryan, 'A one-man open university' in J.J. Eddy and J.R. Nethercote (eds.), *From Colony to Colonizer* (1987).

system⁷ which had developed under the Act of 1880; (adult) educational pressures from Mothers' Clubs⁸, Parents and Citizens' Associations, etc.; the state *Libraries Act of 1939*; the first *Technical Education Act* (Act 20 of 1944), (this causing the belated expansion of the Technical Education section, the poverty of which was revealed by the 1933 Committee⁹ of Enquiry); and innovative (local) contacts with North America¹⁰, which brought Dean John Russell from Columbia University in 1928 and, a little later, would send H.S. Wyndham (later Director General of Education, N.S.W.) to Stanford University.

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Educational Changes and the University of Sydney's Extension Activities

The story of formal extension activities in the north of the state, and at the New England centres, after the Schools of Arts, is one necessarily bound up with the main provider, the University of Sydney and its extension activities¹¹. R.B. Madgwick of that University would be lecturing for the University's Department of Tutorial Classes, from 1929 to 1933, and again in 1936, he then being offered and accepting in 1937 the Secretaryship of the Sydney University Extension Board, a position just vacated by Dr. Edgar H. Booth on his own appointment as Warden of the newly-established New England University College at Armidale. As has been explained elsewhere¹², Madgwick was to modify the more rigidly 'academic' and metropolitan

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7. Opposition to this Act and its consequence, the dreaded '*Head Office*', was the peculiar philosophical core of the career of New England adult educationalist, Campbell Howard. See J.S. Ryan, '*A.C.M. Howard and the Armidale Teachers' College (1928-1948)*', pp. 60-73, *A.D.H.S.J. & P.*, No. 29 (1986).
 8. See W.G.K. Duncan, *Adult Education in New South Wales* (1944), pp. 35, 40.
 9. The hero of this group was Captain Alek W. Hicks, M.C., M.A., at various times Assistant Under Secretary to the Department of Education, (Armidale) District Inspector, and State Superintendent of Technical Education. See D. Drummond, *A University is Born* (1959), pp. xii-xiv, 3, 26, 30-1, etc. He was an important facilitator of post-secondary education in the north.
 10. The same liberating contact would galvanize the thoughts of R.B. Madgwick, J.P. Belshaw, A.J.A. Nelson, N. Crew and others important to the leadership of adult education in New England.
 11. See J.S. Ryan, '*The Educational Experiences and Philosophies of R.B. Madgwick, Prior to 1947*', *A.D.H.S.J. & P.*, No. 28, (1985), especially pp. 19-21.
 12. *Loc. cit.*, p. 19.

policies of that Board and to divert considerable resources¹³ to lecture tours and extension offerings, in the northern regions of the state.

Thus the 1935-36 *Report* includes mention of typical visits to the North Coast of economist Dr. R. Walker and anthropologist Professor A.P. Elkin, with economic and political lectures at Casino, Lismore, etc. by Dr. R.B. Madgwick, under the auspices of the Casino and the Lismore Schools of Arts, with considerable prominence being given to the lectures and their reception there in *The Northern Star*. The Secretary of the Lismore group wrote illuminatingly in that local paper of the reception of one lecture:

The address was very instructive and enjoyable to the audience ... The committee is grateful to ... the Sydney University Extension Board for [their] kindness in providing the facilities for such an enlightening address. (1936 *Report*, p. 18)

The next year's *Report* shows that all the 'Country Circuit' work from the University was northern, viz: at Casino from Professor R.D. Watt, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture;¹⁴ at Casino and Kyogle, by Professor S.H. Roberts (History); the latter giving another 7 lectures in the North-West, with Narrabri as base; while, in another section, Dr. R.B. Madgwick is listed as having lectured on 'The Problem of Immigration as it Affects Australia'.

Two lectures for Armidale, requested by Rt. Rev. John Moyes, were on Planning and Architecture, and given in August, 1937. An appended note reads:

C.B. Newling, Esq., B.A., Principal, Teachers' College, Armidale) also assisted the Board to which he wrote thus: 'I should like to express the gratitude of myself and my staff to the University Board for the privilege of having the lecture by Mr. A.J. Brown, Vernon Memorial Lecturer in Town Planning.

Two (typical) lectures at Narrabri, in conjunction with the Parents and Citizens' Association, from James Nangle, Government Astronomer of New South Wales, were given in June 1937.

13. The following details are taken from the Extension Board's *Annual Reports* for 1935-36, 1936-37, 1937-38 and 1939-40.

14. A Scot by extraction, he developed a considerable attachment to Northern N.S.W. See his *The Romance of the Australian Land Industries* (1955) and the book by his son-in-law, Emeritus Professor Neil Yeates, *Robert Dickie Watt, Kt., First Professor of Agriculture, The University of Sydney* (1967), especially chs. 6 and 7.

Under the fourth section of the Report, entitled 'North and North-Western Agricultural Bureau¹⁵ of New South Wales', there occurs an item of interest for the future of extension for agriculture (and economics) in the north.

The Board now arranges a lecture for each meeting of the Annual Conference. The previous one had been at Attunga; the meeting for 1937 was at Narrabri. The address was delivered on 24th February 1937 by Professor R.D. Watt., the title being 'The School of Agriculture at Sydney University'. The audience was approximately two hundred farmers and graziers.

The same report included reference to many lectures by Major Edgar H. Booth, and others by Dr. R.B. Madgwick. Another Report submitted in mid-1940, and written by Dr. Madgwick, referred to:

- (i) 87 lectures in country centres;
- (ii) the use of (NEUC) staff,¹⁵ for German classes in Armidale with '84 meetings' (p. 5);
- (iii) 41 (of the 87 lectures mentioned above) were delivered at a Summer School in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry held at the New England University College from 5 to 17 February, arrangements having been made by the Warden, Dr. E.H. Booth. The report continues:

In all, forty-one lectures were delivered by such persons as J. Somerville [the College foundation lecturer in Physics and Mathematics], A.H. Voisey, Dr. W.L. Waterhouse, Professor R.D. Watt and Colonel H.F. White.¹⁷

The evenings were taken up with discussions and public lectures and in addition, there were field days at the following properties; Abington, Abington Cottage, Bald

- 15. The Agricultural Bureau of New South Wales was founded in 1910, its purposes being:
'to promote rural adult education in general, and agricultural extension in particular, to organize local co-operative group effort to improve amenities and conditions in rural areas, and to train members and other interested rural people in citizenship, leadership and community responsibilities.' (p. 131 of Donald B. Williams, *Agricultural Extension* (1968).)
- 16. This reference is the first to the participation by N.E.U.C. staff in the Sydney Board's work. By the early 1950s there would be many doing this, e.g. J.M. Somerville (Physics), J.P. Belshaw (Econs.), N. Beadle (Botany), etc., some of whom would oppose a.e. after 1965.
- 17. Colonel Harold White, one of Australia's best-known and most spectacularly successful graziers would, in 1953, produce with Profesor Sir C. Stanton Hicks (Human Physiology, University of Adelaide) *Life from Soil*, a remarkable book of practice and theory, with many New England examples (e.g. pp. 31-3) of excessive pasture growth, overstocking, fattening cattle, etc. His style of cooperation with academe was paralleled by that of Peter Wright a generation later.

Blair (Colonel H.F. White), Gostwyck (Gostwyck Estate),
and New England Experimental Farm (N.S.W. Govt.).

Other regional items of interest in the same report refer to: six lectures on history and psychology to the Casino School of Arts; Dr. W.G.K. Duncan's lecturing on Hitler and Russia at Coonabarabran and Coonamble, for the Parents and Citizens' Association; the Guyra Branch of the Agricultural Bureau of the N.S.W. requesting Dr. Stanner to lecture on 'The International Situation', as did the Lismore School of Arts, including another address on 'Post-War Reconstruction'; while the same Lismore group received from the psychologist, C.A. Gibb, three on: 'The Psychology of National Groups' 'Psychological Causes of War' and 'Propaganda in Dictatorship and Democracy'. All these Extension offerings¹⁸ from Sydney may be seen to define early in the story some of the educational 'needs' of the larger New England region, which would become the responsibility of the University College and University after 1945. Yet already certain patterns had begun to emerge - international affairs; an interest in economic forces¹⁹ external to a Australia; a seeming fascination with the 'north' from R.B. Madgwick; a modest demand, largely from P. and C. groups, for (educational) psychology; the N.E.U.C.'s participation in agricultural extension; and a concern for necessary social and economic reconstruction after the war. The influence of the thought of Bentham, Mill and Beveridge was already to be heard in many social arenas.

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Dr. Edgar Booth (1893-1963), a physics lecturer at the University of Sydney from 1919, would in 1937 become the foundation Warden of the New England University College. As has been pointed out more recently,²⁰

His organising ability, courage and determination, seen in 1917-18, were again apparent as he established the College and held off its enemies until he left towards the end of 1945 ...

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18. There has been no detailed reference to the many lectures, both in Sydney and in Armidale by Dr. E. Booth, on his war experiences in France in 1917 and 1918.
 19. Such lectures, combined with political themes, were supplied by H.D. Black, H.C. Coombs, and R.B. Madgwick.
 20. Bruce Mitchell 'One Man's War ... 1917 as Seen by Edgar Booth', *A.D.H.S.J. & P.* 31 (1988), p. 94. See also D. Drummond's assessment of him, *A University is Born* (1959), p. xiii. He won the M.C. in 1917 and later earned the D.Sc. (Edin.) and D.Sc. (Hon.) (U.N.E.) and F.A.N.Z.A.A.S.

At the University of Sydney he was for more than a decade the Secretary of the University's Extension Board.²¹ That time also shows him very active in leading country lecture programmes, as with H.F.E. Whitlam and 'the University Association of Canberra' (p. 19), or in 1936-37 giving 'Science in the Home - 20 lecture-demonstrations at the University' (p. 35). After his transfer to Armidale, he soon became active in N.E.U.C. extension work, setting up local education committees (1939-40 *Annual Report*, pp. 7, 19), as well as working with his Sydney successor, Madgwick, to bring lectures to the north (pp. 20-22). Thus in February 1941, there were special Armidale offerings for the 15th Agricultural Bureau's Conference, viz.: 1. Wheat Breeding for the North and North-West; 2. the Australian Wool Industry; and 3. the influence of Climate and Seasons on the Fertility of Sheep. Of this conference, the 1941 *Report of the Senate of the University* notes:

A large number of conference officials and distinguished speakers were the guests of the University College ... and most of the lectures and demonstrations were given in the University buildings and grounds. Delegates to the Conference came from all parts of northern New South Wales. (p. 29)

That same 1941 *Report* records a further significant contact under the heading, *Army Education Service* -

At the request of the Director of Welfare and Vocational Training, a meeting was convened at New England University College on 20 November 1941, to form an Advisory Committee for educational services in Northern New South Wales. ... assisting unit education officers in northern camps. A panel of lectures was prepared and approved, and lectures have been arranged and are proceeding. ... The lectures have been very well received, and it is felt that they have been of benefit to the troops, (pp. 29-30)

It also refers (p. 24) to the great increase in discussion groups in the north, at Byron Bay, Bingara, Grafton, etc., the courses being 'designed especially for country districts' (*ibid.*), and that 'a network of listening groups²² has been developed ... by the Australian Broadcasting Commission ... in country centres' (p. 25), with University discussion material being supplied to the A.E.S. (Army Education Service). At the same time various professors and other academics sympathetic to a.e. were involved in and planning research for post-war 'Reconstruction' under the Department of Labour and National Service. Although Madgwick was now in the

21. The Body's records have been misplaced in Sydney's Archives. The following details are derived largely from that authority's incomplete *Reports* in the papers of Sir Stephen Roberts (held there).

22. With 'Honorary Organizers' of listening groups 'in country centres' (p. 25). Compare the 'Radio Farm Forum', discussed in Chapter IV.

Army, his democratizing influence on the Board continued, with its 1941 policy stressing its purposes of

- (i) 'bringing University teaching within the reach of men and women ... unable to attend the University' ('Lecture List', p. 2);
- and (ii) encouraging applications for lectures from 'public institutions such as Parents and Citizens' Associations, Municipal and Shire Councils, Progress Associations or Schools of Arts, ... or by committees²³ specially formed for the purpose.

Further, 'every person who attends [a] course will be supplied with a syllabus containing an analysis of each lecture'.

The 1941 lecture list was notable for the inclusion of various N.E.U.C. names of persons available to give extension lectures,²⁴ such as:

J.P. Belshaw, Lecturer in Economics, 7 topics and multiple lectures²⁵ on Peace and Reconstruction; Government Policy and Depression; Effects of Declining Population; Unemployment and Unemployment Policies, etc. (p. 10);

and

Duncan Howie, Lecturer in Psychology and Philosophy, 7 topics covering: emotion; propaganda; child development; 'The Law and the Gospel in Education'; Dictators; etc.

In 1942, in the *Report of the Senate*, it is recorded that there were many country Discussion Groups, with use of properly printed Army courses (p. 31), as well as Tutorial Classes sending members to broadcast 'Burning Questions' (p. 32) on the A.B.C.; and lectures at Army Camps (pp. 33, 35) in New England, at Armidale, Tamworth, Uralla, and at Walcha; and others for the public at Gunnedah, Guyra, Manilla and Tamworth. A linked activity is the Booth-led Northern New South Wales Committee of the Education Services Advisory Council which 'co-operated actively ... acting in a general advisory capacity, assisting with demonstrations ... and arranging courses of Lectures at Army Camps' (p. 35). By 1943, extension work had reached some 200 discussion groups among the state's National Emergency Services personnel, with language work in country centres (*Report*, p. 21),

- 23. The group charge per lecture was only £2, with the Board paying 'the travelling expenses of the lecturer'.
- 24. Also on the list was Professor F.A. (Armand) Bland, Professor of Public Administration, and 'a staunch friend' to the new University. (Drummond, *op. cit.*, p. 102).
- 25. In 1942 he had added 'Money and Banking' and 'World Federation' (p. 10, of list), presumably an anticipation of the U.N. Organization.

and country lectures at Cessnock, Coonamble, and Singleton. The year saw expansion in a.e., with class enrolments increasing some 50% (*Report*, p. 18), and with the 1941-established²⁶ Advisory Committee on Adult Education making large grants to the W.E.A., to the Public Library of New South Wales and to the Department of Tutorial Classes. As the Senate Report observes, significantly,

In this atmosphere of growth the question of the future organization ... of adult education and in particular of the place of the University within such a scheme, are being widely discussed (p. 19).

In the following year, 1944, the Senate at its May meeting had

'considered a request from the Executive of the N.S.W. Public School Teachers' Federation for correspondence courses, to be extended to cover persons resident in the country The Senate resolved to reject the suggestion. (*Report of the Senate*, p. 24, sec. 34)

This dismissal of 'external' tuition at the University of Sydney was in spite of the fact that the Premier had had established under Professor E. Ashby's chairmanship 'a committee to conduct a general survey of the future development of University Education in New South Wales' (p. 25), and the additional fact that:

The total number of enrolments in tutorial classes and discussion groups conducted by the Department was 6,253; the number of individual students totalled, 4,879 - a figure considerably above that for individual students in the University. (p. 26)

These numbers were not inclusive of the University's special Department of External Studies' army students.²⁷ Meanwhile, Dr. Booth had been championing his fledgeling college and circulating widely his own views on regionalism, and on a.e., as in the pamphlet, *Decentralization of University Education*²⁸, from which these concepts are excerpted:

'Decentralized' University Education means ... opening up ... centres remote from our present Universities' (p. 2);

26. By the Minister of Education. It continued to function alongside the Services Education Advisory Committee.

27. See the 1944 *Report of the Senate* (p. 27) and J.S. Ryan, 'The Foundation of External Studies at New England', *The University of New England External Studies Gazette*, Vol. 26, No. 5, December 1982, p. 3. The 1944 enrolments were more than three and half times the total of 1942. (*Report*, p. 27).

28. Published in Armidale in 1943 and widely distributed throughout N.S.W.

does a university 'depart' from its true function' ... by the 'extension ... of the facilities offered by Technical Colleges, Agricultural Colleges ..?' (p. 3);
 'the primary purpose of our Universities ... is to give opportunity to all²⁹ (p. 4);
 educational institutions should be 'completely residential ... so as to introduce the fully community spirit' (p. 9);
 and that N.E.U.C. should 'have immediately a Faculty of Rural Economy' (p. 12).

Another prophetic remark was

I believe that ... the older Universities should not have a fretful suspicion of every activity, of such newer [activities as] ... we may conceive. (p. 10)

A few months later the Christmas Summer School³⁰ discussed adult tutorial groups in isolation, stressing the need for tutors' visits, etc. Dr. Booth also made significant contributions to the Sydney University Extension Board in the year 1944-45³¹, as did H.D. Black then to the Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes.

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The N.E. Thought and Extension Work of J.P. Belshaw, 1938-1944

Despite Booth's long association with the Extension Board, and many calls for such help for Armidale, the real extensionist of the early N.E.U.C. years was a staff member, the New Zealand born James Pilkington Belshaw (1908-1984)³², Lecturer-in-Charge in Economics and History from 1938 to 1954, the son of a Lancashire Low Church clergyman, a friend of J.B. Conliffe³³, and, despite his brilliant university and I.L.O. career, a school teacher and committed regionalist in New Zealand's South Island in the early Depression. Significantly he was also the younger brother of Professor Horace Belshaw (1898-1962) - early an adult educationalist in

29. Including many deemed as 'undesirables' or 'untouchables' (p. 5).

30. A larger one, organized by the W.E.A., ran over the summer of 1944-45.

31. See *Minutes* and the 1945 Senate Report.

32. A succinct but important obituary is that by R.C. Gates in the *U.N.E. Smith's Weekly*, Vol. 25, No. 29, 27 July 1984, p. 1.

33. Successively Professor of: Economics (Canterbury U.C. 1920-26); Commerce (L.S.E. 1937-39); Economics (U.C.L.A., Berkeley, 1939-58).

Southern New Zealand, then: economic adviser³⁴ to the New Zealand Government; professor of agricultural economics, U.C.L.A., in 1946; rural welfare division director of the F.A.O. in 1948; etc. - and would himself become the son-in-law of the Hon. David Drummond, the founder of N.E.U.C. In addition to his visits to Army camps in New England in the early 1940s, Belshaw was to turn his early research energies to dialogue with the region. In addition to his numerous newspaper articles³⁵ there are extant his more formal studies, such as

- (i) *The Future of the Australian Export Industries* (August, 1944; 24pp.);
 - (ii) (with Earle Page, *The Need for the Establishment of a Faculty of Agricultural Economics* (October, 1946; 14 pp.);
 - (iii) *Decentralization of University Education* (1948; 10 pp.)
 - (iv) *Report on the Establishment of a Faculty of Agricultural Economics* (1954; University of New England, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, pp. III + 116, mimeo);
- or his (v) *Social and Economic Revolution for the Development of Backward Countries* (1956; University of New England; pp. ii + 27).

All the last extension publications, with wide local circulation, are a judicious blend of theory and practice, of local, national and international perspectives.

Thus the first (1944) offers these points: there is a close nexus in Australia between national and farming prosperity (p. 2); there is a dangerous dependence on Britain as a market (p. 3); the U.N. will need to be concerned with food trade cycles after the war (p. 9); and 'increases in food consumption will follow any redistribution of, national income achieved by social security measures³⁶, (p. 12). It may safely be assumed that this was the style of his many Extension lectures on similar themes at that time.

The second text (issued in 1946, but merely a revision of a similarly titled 1944 set of notes by Drummond and Belshaw) stresses the need for a strong 'extension service to provide the rural producer with this knowledge' (p. 4). Post-war settlement problems are foreshadowed (pp. 7-8),

34. See his: *Recovery Measures in New Zealand* (1936); *Agricultural Reconstruction in the Far East* (1947); *Agricultural Credit in Economically Underdeveloped Countries* (1959), etc.

35. In the *Armidale Express*, *Northern Daily Leader*, etc.

36. See his 'Beveridge and the New Order', *The Australian Quarterly*, June, 1943. See also the New Zealand background to Belshaw's thought as discussed in Appendix A to the present thesis.

as are: education for the country; local government work³⁷ there; and the need for a Faculty of Agricultural Economics to be active conducting extension work among the people in rural areas in cooperation with the Department of Adult Education at the University (*sic*). (p.12) Senior members of the Faculty could well: encourage co-operative movements (p. 13); and 'publish' research findings variously e.g. by radio talks³⁸, at 'schools' etc. (p. 13). The third text is a shrewd comparative essay, making invidious remarks about Australia's educational provisions, the inadequacy of teacher-student contact in the state capital universities, (p. 4), and stressing the ability of a rural university

to exercise a marked effect upon [its] region ... [to] act as a general educational stimulus particularly on the adult level³⁹; ... and make a most effective contribution to the welfare of the region through their social, economic and general research work. (p. 5)

Inter alia, the paper stressed the potential for regional conferences and that such a regional institution would be the 'power house' of the region. A footnote (p. 5) refers to the College's 1943 plan for a Regional Research Bureau, but that the work was delayed until 1948. The fifth (Belshaw's inaugural lecture as professor) contains many wise remarks, on the philosophical and moral questions with which an economist is involved (p. 3), adding:

There is a high correlation between income on the one hand, and ... health, longevity, and literacy [all assumed to be] ... elements of welfare. (p. 3)

Significantly, his conclusion is that community development is 'a wise and helpful charity' (p. 23). Meantime he had been sole or co-author for five of the first six 'Regional Research Monographs of the New England College' (1950-51), and in 1958, supported by then Deputy Chancellor, P.A. Wright, Belshaw would appoint N.D. Crew to his own Department as Research Fellow into 'the economic development of New England from 1921'. All the publications stress the need for rural adult education to be 'residential' and for all university work to be 'extended' to adults in the community.

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37. Many of these would soon be key concerns of Eberle and of Nelson.

38. This was done with great success by the A.B.C. (Tamworth) from the founding of a station there in November, 1948.

39. He suggested that the University College Library could be 'for the general use of the people of the region' (p. 5).

Australian Servicemen and Wartime and their Wartime and Civilian (Reconstruction) Needs

New England's great future exemplars of a.e. - Eberle, Madgwick and Nelson - were all officers in the Army Education Service in the 1939-45 war, and all had backgrounds in the impoverished country and in the Depression time, which put fire into their similar peacetime work. Yet even more importantly, there had occurred in 1936

the [revolutionary] publication ... of John Maynard Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Industry and Money* ... for me and for many of my generation the most seminal intellectual event of our time. H.C. Coombs, *Trial Balance* (1981), p. 3,

a simplified model of the economic system, which had a stunning impact on Coombs (from 1935 living in Sydney⁴⁰) and on his Sydney University economist friends of those years, Professor R.C. Mills, Robert Madgwick, Hermann Black, etc. (*op. cit.*, p. 4). H.C. Coombs' own spiritual autobiography tells very eloquently of his dialogue with Ben Chifley, who, Beveridge-inspired, was, in 1942,

already working ... to develop ... a minimum basis for personal economic security after the war. Furthermore, his association with R.C. Mills had brought him into touch with the developing Keynesian theories ... (*op. cit.*, p. 24)

At the end of that year Coombs, as 'Director of Reconstruction' (p. 25), was envisaging that Department: 'as an instrument of social change. Closely linked concern was [for] ... re-establishing Service men and women in civil life, by training, placement, and by settlement ... (p. 26) The whole optimistic policy aimed at full employment, social improvement and Australian participation in 'the development of a new and better international economic order.' (p. 27)

Meanwhile there had been appearing in the (Madgwick-controlled) A.E.S. journal, *Salt*, a series of pieces on what would happen to servicemen after the war:

- 'Repatriation: Are You Eligible?' (I, 6, 3 Nov. 1941, p. 28);
- 'Catering for New and Returned Men', II, 6, 9 Feb. 1942, p. 39;
- 'Our New Order ... Post-War Plans', III, 10, 8 June 1942, pp. 26-28;
- '1000 Houses a Week', IV, 13, 28 Sept. 1942, pp. 12-16;
- 'Reconstruction Bill ... Post-War Reconstruction', V, 4, 26 Oct. 1942, pp. 12-15;
- 'Reconstruction for Post-War Jobs: Training on Discharge', VI,

40. First as Assistant Economist with the Commonwealth Bank (1935), then Economist with the Treasury (1939), and Director of Rationing (1942). He was Director of Post-war Reconstruction from 1943 to 1949.

3, 12 April, 1943, pp. 7-11;
 'Post-War: Soldiers on the Land', VI, 10, 19 July, 1943, pp. 36-40.

The issue of 25 September 1944 (IX, 2) contained 'An Open Letter' to Dr. Coombs discussing: Education; Intelligence; Aptitude; Training; Availability of Jobs, etc. (pp. 48-51), while that (IX, 8), of 18 December, considered the possibility of release of men to complete interrupted degrees (p. 38), and that (IX, 10) of 15 January 1945, how to get one's old job back (pp. 30-31). Although Coombs did not actually sign an article published in *Salt*, there was a flood of confident reconstruction material from his Ministry, in a great Keynesian synthesis, about government intervention in social and economic affairs, akin to his input into the 1944 White Paper.⁴¹

Another member of that Department of Reconstruction was Jack [later Sir John] Crawford, himself first a teacher and then an economist on the staff of the Rural Bank of N.S.W., who is an important figure for New England extension with an impact in rural economics and their regional application. A long letter⁴² of 18/10/1948 from Belshaw to Madgwick (by then Warden of N.E.U.C.) stresses that Crawford was not, however, the 'father' of these then burgeoning local endeavours:

The faculty of agricultural economics [at New England] was originally my baby. ... fathered in 1944 and christened in a White Paper in 1946. Since then ... there is a possibility that the child has been stolen by a foster parent in Sydney. (p. 1)

Belshaw is probably correct in the notion of his being the first to think of such a faculty being established in Armidale. He had known of the New Zealand research unit founded in 1926,⁴³ and, as there, the history of agricultural economics teaching, research and extension is, necessarily, bound up with the public administration of agriculture. The 1948 letter argues (p. 1) that Crawford's suggestions are too 'largely descriptive' and too concerned with Britain rather than Australia (p. 2). Further, Crawford had omitted Belshaw's (1944, 1946) preference, 'Rural Sociology of rural life' (p. 2), and seemed ignorant of the fact that the farmer is 'a member of rural groups' (p. 3). The last paragraph of the letter stressed Belshaw's hope of visiting the U.K. and U.S.A. (which he did in 1952-53),

41. See also his 'The Economic Aftermath of War' in D.A.S. Campbell (ed.), *Post-War Reconstruction in Australia* (1944), pp. 97-99.

42. 6 pp. of fcp. A copy was made available by Professor J.L. Dillon.

43. 15 years before the similar one in Australia. See K.O. Campbell, 'A Review of the Development of Agricultural Economics in Australia, 1935-60', *Journal of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science*, Vol. 26, No. 2, July 1960, pp. 206-216.

to study their teaching and research, and 'extension work among farmers', as well as the F.A.O. in Washington⁴⁴ and 'adult education in Denmark'. The tour concluded and the 1954 Belshaw Report (vi above) circulated, the Council of the University decided to establish the Faculty, J.N. Lewis being appointed to the Chair of Agricultural Economics⁴⁵ early in 1957. But to return to Madgwick, and to his formative experiences.

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Robert Bowden Madgwick's career prior to 1947⁴⁶

Robert Madgwick (1905-1979), of Sydney working-class and low church Anglican persuasion, was brought up 'to discuss, indeed to question, almost everything', and held his parents' concept '[that] all men and women were sacred, and poverty and injustice were in some way contrary to God's teaching.' ('Memoir', p. 1) Perhaps significantly, there were Hunter Valley, Maitland and Grafton antecedents to the family. With a tram-driver father and a dressmaker mother 'determined to the point of stubbornness' to set goals for her family, Madgwick saw later that the important things of his life had always been family, church and school. And so, after a First Class Honours degree in Economics at the University of Sydney, he did some school teaching, chiefly valuable since it taught him that

all young people are not equal either in ability or in motivation, but that each one was a worthy object of my endeavours and ... had a right to be helped to achieve his potential. (*Op. cit.*, pp. 55-56)

In 1929 he became an acting lecturer in Economics, soon after being joined there by H.C. Coombs and H.D. Black, and involved in adult education work, conducting classes at the University, and at Bondi and Manly. Close friends then and later included H.D. Black, (Sir) Stephen Roberts, Ian Clunies Ross

44. Interestingly his elder brother, Horace, had by this date, become the Director of the Rural Welfare Division of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.

45. Teaching began in 1958. (See in Chapter III.)

46. This section is, necessarily, based on J.S. Ryan, 'The Educational Experiences and Philosophies of R.B. Madgwick prior to 1947' and the like address of 1984 to the Armidale and District Historical Society and published in its *Journal*, No. 28, March 1985, pp. 16-41, and on the same's editorial matter in Sir Hermann Black, *The Communicative-Learner* (1985). Both refer to Madgwick's 'Memoir', left unpublished at his death in 1979.

(later professor of Veterinary Science) and W.G.K. Duncan,⁴⁷ then Assistant Director of Tutorial Classes.

Madgwick's time in Oxford (1933-1935) was followed by a Sydney lectureship in Economic History from 1936. At the time he felt that England was finished spiritually and socially and he recalled, some forty years later, 'the look of spiritual and moral degeneration - of absolute hopelessness - in the faces of unemployed miners and industrial workers'. Upon his return to Sydney he continued with a weekly class for the Department of Tutorial Classes, under the direction of Dr. Duncan, with whom he would collaborate very closely in later years, although he maintained that he had nothing of the other's 'wide knowledge' of the philosophy of a.e. (p. 66). In 1937, upon Dr. E. Booth's removal to the N.E.U.C., Madgwick was offered and accepted the post of Secretary of the Sydney University Extension Board.

In his memoir,⁴⁸ Madgwick discusses the conservative nature of his Board with some distaste, and his attempt to activate the more cautious body by methods more akin to those of the Joint Committee for the Supervision of Tutorial Classes. This Committee founded in 1914, which went its separate way from 1918, provided almost all the tutorial classes⁴⁹ and study circles possible within its limited funding. In Madgwick's view the Board

professed to provide university extension in the strict literal sense of carrying ... into the community the benefits of university teaching and research.

This was not adult education as I believed it should be. Successful education at any level can never be rigid or conservative; and in the field of adult education the approach had to be infinitely varied if it were to appeal to people with infinitely varied backgrounds, hopes and aspirations.⁵⁰

In the period of his secretaryship (1937-1940), Madgwick set several courses in train which may well have resulted in the less pretentious

47. See the important sketch of Duncan (b. 1903) by the late J.L.J. Wilson (pp. 155-160), in J.E. Thomas and B. Elsey (eds.), *International Biography of Adult Education* (1985).

48. His remarks fill in certain areas of Sydney policy not discussed by Derek Whitelock in his *The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia*, 1974, in Chapters 5 and 6.

49. See Whitelock, *op. cit.*, p. 168 and pp. 9, 10 of *The Vision Splendid*, the first publication - in 1973 - of W.G.K. Duncan's 1944 Report, 'Adult Education in Australia'. Duncan discussed the actual details in his *Adult Education in New South Wales: A Survey*, Sydney University, mimeo, 1944.

50. R.B. Madgwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

Department of Tutorial Classes at Sydney University becoming in 1966 the Department of Adult Education, following upon the termination of the University Extension Board in 1964. These were:

- (a) the move towards the ultimate development of an effective adult education policy within the university;
- (b) the following up of Extension lectures with Tutorial Classes, (also done later for languages), with the co-operation of the Director, Dr. W.G.K. Duncan, and the Assistant Director, J.L.J. Wilson⁵¹;
- (c) a widening of the Board membership so that it would be less 'conservative if not reactionary' (ultimately having Professors Eric Ashby, A.H. McDonald, and A.D. Trendall added to its extended membership);
- (d) developing contacts with the Sydney business community in such areas as: accountancy; financial administration; real estate; business management; town planning; etc.;
- (e) lectures in business and law and on the importance of aviation; and
- (f) 'more and more lectures on international affairs'.⁵²

Dr. Madgwick was the writer of the dynamic 1938-39 Report of the Extension Board, from which in retrospect he quotes, his own emphasis that it was

One of the most successful (years) - for the variety of subjects chosen and the fact that so many centres were opened up ...;

and throws out the challenge:

The country centres⁵³ ... have shown an enthusiasm for extension lectures Unfortunately it has been necessary to view all requests from country centres in the light of the reduced receipts following the failure of lectures in the University. (pp. 93-94)

The success of these various innovations reaching out from Sydney was later pondered on by him:

if adult education were to succeed it must start by finding out what people were interested in, and then starting out to satisfy their interests.

51. Very soon to be one of Madgwick's key officers in Army Education. See his early article. 'The Eyes Have It', in *SALT*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 10 November, 1941, pp. 29-30; or his 'Courses by Correspondence', *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 2 February 1941, pp. 34-37.

52. R.B. Madgwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-94.

53. The *Memoir* indicates his interest in increasing services to the country from the beginning when he referred to 'providing lectures or short series of lectures in the country', p. 89.

Alert to the various counter arguments as to the propriety of such courses, he continued -

There is nothing at all wrong about this, providing adequate standards are maintained in both the lectures and the subject matter, for it can be established easily enough that the satisfaction of one interest or felt need will inevitably produce others, and the educational process continues. Always in the past the starting point had been not what people wanted, but what they needed or should have.

He went on to express his exasperation at merely catering for the converted rather than for 'the great mass of the people who should be the main concern of genuine adult education programmes' (p. 94), and preferred to find out 'what ordinary people are really like, the general sociology of their environments and what they want' (p. 95), that provision being 'genuine liberal adult education'. (p. 96)

For several months during 1940 Madgwick was involved in the agitation for an Education Service in the Australian Army. Both in 1940 and later,⁵⁴ Dr. Madgwick, too, was to underscore the value of 'broad and flexible education' as in Russia, in China, or in the Spanish Republican Army. His later defence of all these provisions of simple education for adults may be quoted

In each of these cases the object was to combat illiteracy and to teach soldiers the bases of the political faiths of their own countries. Nevertheless the propagandist political flavour does not detract from ... the demonstration they gave of the eagerness with which the ordinary man or woman will accept education if it is attractively presented in an interesting way. ('Memoir', pp. 98-99)

Despite little initial enthusiasm from the Military Board, Madgwick at this time was to the fore in 'a small but very interesting experiment', the germ of the later Army Education Service. This was the programme of lectures and discussion which it fell to him to organize for the students of the Sydney University Regiment, at Menangle from the outbreak of the war in September 1939. While the troops were by no means typical, its organiser was to reflect subsequently that

The significance of this small experiment lay in the demonstration it gave of the fact that soldiers, even if they were not typical, were eager to listen to talks, and take part in discussions in current affairs, both national and international. This made a strong impression on the minds of the men who visited the Regiment to give talks ... particularly on

54. R.B. Madgwick, 'the A.A.E.S. - Another Point of View', *Forum of Education*, Vol. III, No. 2, October 1949, pp. 53-63.

the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Wallace, Professor R.C. Mills,⁵⁵ ... and myself, all of whom were later to become closely associated with the work of the Australian Army Education Service. It seemed to suggest that Army Education ... should be more closely akin to general liberal education than to professional and technical vocational training. ('Memoir', p. 104)

As was noted, too, the more literal approach 'involved comparatively little expense', yet had considerable force.

In May 1940, the planners had many more meetings, with Drummond⁵⁶ arranging a conference of educational authorities to be held on 20 August. That meeting, Madgwick maintained, was highly significant for

(a) its education scheme for the Army; (b) its positive thinking about adult education; (c) its stress on necessary 'general and cultural education'; and on (d) the need for 'early planning for repatriation training' and re-establishment.⁵⁷

The consequence of this preliminary encounter was that when in early November the Minister for the Army, the Hon. P.C. Spender, called for an educational scheme for the A.I.F., the University of Sydney, with the warm approval of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Wallace, endorsed the existing group comprising R.C. Mills, W.G.K. Duncan, A.A.J. Conlon R.B. Madgwick and approved an education scheme substantially along the lines which the Sydney groups had worked out. ('Memoir', p. 106) In the establishment of the Army Education Service, we may note Madgwick's commencement of duty, 1 March

55. Richard Charles Mills, Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney (1922-1945), was long Madgwick's mentor, and led him on such bodies as the Australian Military Education Council, the Universities Commission, the sub-committee on Repatriation Training and Placement of the Members of the Forces of the War, the Commonwealth Inter-Departmental Committee on Education, and the Interim Council for the Australian National University. In March 1944, Mills referred to Madgwick in his address to the Future of Adult Education in Australia Conference (see its Addresses, entitled *The Future of Adult Education in Australia* (1944) and edited by W.G.K. Duncan, pp. 18, 19, 22).

56. David Drummond would himself refer to Madgwick later in his own retrospective volume - *A University is Born: The Story of the Founding of the University College of New England* (1959) in the following fashion:

'The new Warden, with a great belief in the virtues of adult education, has vigorously pursued a policy of taking the university to the people ... and has also extended and enlarged the policy of Dr. Booth (the Warden to 1945) in organizing schools for men on the land.' (p. 98)

57. R.B. Madgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

1941, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and the various plans⁵⁸ - designed to cover 250,000 troops in Australia - all of which were approved by the War Cabinet in May 1941.

The War Cabinet Agendum No. 55/1941 approved the original schemes of the Sydney group, the whole to be advised by an Australian Military Education Council, the members of which 'will be representatives of the universities and the State Education Departments'. The chairman for the duration (1941-1946) was Mr. J.D.G. (later Sir John) Medley,⁵⁹ Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University and the Council included amongst its members C.K. Badger (Director of University Extension, University of Melbourne), Dr. W.G.K. Duncan (Director of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney), and the Directors of Education of the three services, one of whom, Group Captain H.C. Sheath (R.A.A.F.) was to be the Director of External Studies at the University of New England (1956-1972). Dr. Madgwick, as the Secretary to the Council, was the closest observer of all the developments of the Education Service, as it expanded to meet specific needs,⁶⁰ the Army education establishment alone increasing to 963 officers and other ranks in 1944-45. When he recorded these events almost 30 years later Robert Madgwick stressed 'the amazing enthusiasm for education ... among troops whose indifference prior to their enlistment was apparently due ... to lack of facilities'; and 'that the purpose must be to provide some intellectual stimulus for the great mass of men and women', and that as

the majority are only interested in doing things or seeing things done, it would be necessary to provide not only libraries, lectures, discussion groups, correspondence courses,

58. His initial budget was for 58,000, divided thus: Hobbies of all kinds, 20,000; Publications (excluding libraries), 6,000; Libraries, 22,000; Projectors, films, etc., 7,000; and Lectures, 3,000. The first establishment of 15 officers and 28 other ranks, included: Lieut-Colonel, 1; Majors, 7; Captains, 5; Lieutenants, 2; Warrant Officers (Class 1), 8; Clerks, 8; and Typists, 10.
59. Medley created in 1946-47 the Mildura branch of Melbourne University, which was a residential university for first year science students. [Geoffrey Blainey discusses this in Chapter 19 of his *A Centenary History of the University of Melbourne* (1957).] In this and in other ways, Medley was to be peculiarly supportive of Madgwick's work in New England. J.P. Belshaw also made use of the Mildura example in various of his planning documents (1946-54). The closing of Mildura was a nightmare which Madgwick and Belshaw were determined should not be repeated in New England.
60. The A.E.S. did not, in the event, function outside of the Australian Continent and Pacific and East Asian theatres. A summary account of this is given on pp. 55-58 of Madgwick's article, 'The A.A.E.S. - Another Point of View', *Forum of Education*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, July 1949.

but also hobby or craft groups, and even basic education in the 3 R's, geography, history and ... education for illiterates.⁶¹

The upshot of these realizations was the publication at the end of 1943 of his passionate conviction, and definition, that 'Adult education is anything that adults want that can be brought under the widest possible definition of education'.⁶²

In his insistence that the whole scheme be devised with rehabilitation in mind, the publication of *SALT* particularly conformed to his concern to establish 'an appreciation of what was occurring while the war was on, both to the soldier himself and to the social, political and economic systems he had left behind him when he had enlisted'. The initial article in *SALT*'s first issue entitled, 'On Thinking Straight', indicates his new definition of education as well as offering a manifesto for modern Australian man. (*SALT*, 1, 1, 29 Sept. 1941, pp. 2-4.) Its flavour of challenge, moral courage and compassion is to be caught by these (sequential) excerpts:

No one has ever before tried to find out exactly what Australians want in the way of instruction and training; and ... to plan a scheme which aimed at giving thousands of Australian adults a chance to educate themselves.

61. R.B. Madgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

The best statement of the dimensions of this problem is the article (probably Madgwick drafted) 'Soldiers who had no Future', *SALT*, Vol. VI, No. 8, 21 June 1943, pp. 42-43 which opens thus:

Of every 25 men in the Australian army, one cannot read or write, or can barely read or write;

Of every 10 men in the Australian army, at least three have not enough education even to start a trade course for which apprenticeship is needed, let alone get a skilled job;

Of every 10 men in the Australian army, eight left school at 14 years or earlier.

These figures, based on cross-section tests, mean that during the war the military efficiency of an important percentage of our army is hampered ... and after the war, as civilians, unless something is done for them, they will be kicked under - and remain under.

62. He added on page 119:

I have believed ever since that the way to establish Adult Education in a city or in the country is to find out what adults want, give it to them, and go on from there. I am certain that the outstanding success of the Department of Adult Education at the University of New England as I knew it later derived from the fact that its first two Directors ... [former] Officers in the Army Education Service ... were prepared to try my definition in the towns and villages of New England and the North West and North Coast of New South Wales.

See (below) his remarks to the W.E.A. in 1944.

Education should be an adventure, something which we undertake because it is interesting as well as instructive.

... democracy cannot survive if decisions are to be made by the people and the people do not understand what they are asked to decide;

and: To me the success of our scheme will be measured by the number of men who become more tolerant of the other man's opinion.

The next Madgwick-signed piece, is captioned 'The Post-War World I Want to See'. After welcoming the initiative taken by the readers in shaping the journal, he discusses the 'dynamic' of democracy and of change:

I believe that the post-war world is at present incapable of looking after itself. It will be what we make it.

We must be prepared for reform, which implies change. This should not worry Australians whose grandfathers and great-grandfathers led the world in political and social reform in the 19th century ...

Post-war reconstruction in Australia (must) spend money on education, on slum clearance, housing, recreation and ... hospitals and clinics.

Finally ... we must have a new attitude towards each other ... We must be prepared to assist the weak and to control the strong. (1, 12, 15 Dec. 1941)

A fortnight later in 'A Tough Assignment', he endeavoured to define economics, seeing it as a study of scarcity, and of the 'waste of resources'. His definition notes with implied disapproval 'wants which clamour to be satisfied' and then concentrated in Beveridgean style on unemployment as a tragic wrong, for 'resources consist of all the abilities of man and all the properties of nature which can be used in production. Two of the most important of these are human labour and time'.

A month later his topic, 'About our Country', (26 Jan. 1942, 11, pp. 2, 4), stressed the quality of settler stock⁶³ which came with the discovery of gold (p. 4) and went on to applaud Australia's political Labor Party, safeguarding the workman's standard of living, maintaining Unionism free from victimization, and improving of working condition as 'triumphs of Australian democracy' which was, prior to Federation, more 'virile' and

63. It is right to associate this pride with his mother's antecedents. Both in his thesis and in conversation he spoke warmly of those of the period post 1851 although qualifying this enthusiasm, as in the more scholarly *Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851* p. 251, when he wrote 'It is ... a grave mistake to acclaim the gold miners as the true foundation of Australia, or to condemn out of hand the less spectacular immigration of the previous years'.

'liberal' than the social and political systems of England and of America.⁶⁴

Since 1900, we have been inclined to track back to what was done by our grandfathers ... education - particularly for adults - has lagged behind other countries; Australian literature has still to develop its national characteristics ... we are not yet a truly educated or cultivated people ... not yet a nation ... (*loc. cit.*, p. 5)

His conclusion stresses the danger of not being 'watchful', but his sober final message is that 'social, political and economic progress are the rewards of earnest endeavour, not of catchwords and creeds, however appealing these may sound'.

In later 1942 Robert Madgwick contributed an editorial article⁶⁵ to *SALT* on the 'A.E.S: Its Past and Coming 12 Months', in which he stressed that 'the Education Service has provided ... mental interests and satisfactions'. His last signed article,⁶⁶ issued on 4 January 1943, 'The Trained Man Always Wins', focuses on the 'true strength of Australia lying in the strength of mind of the individual soldier', which would help later to achieve in peace 'a standard of living at least as high as they enjoyed before the war' and so 'lives which are culturally full and satisfactory'. His conclusions are that all must 'think straight' and so 'do something [for the future] by finding out ... by becoming interested in economics and current affairs, and by exercising our minds',⁶⁷ and to be better soldiers

64. Madgwick lauds the unique unemployment insurance of Queensland in his *Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851*, and follows on from the idealism of R.C. Mills' study, *The Colonization of Australia, 1829-42*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1915. [The Mills volume which earned him the degree of Doctor of Science (Economics), London, was re-issued in a 1974 facsimile edition by the Sydney University Press, with a Note by S.J. Butlin.] For an assessment of the books by both professor and pupil see H.M. Green, *A History of Australian Literature*, 1961, Vol. II, pp. 1256-58.

65. *SALT*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 3 August 1942, p. 1. A year of the Service is stated to have, generated over a million attendances at lectures, classes, etc.; presented over 6,000 lectures and film programmes; assisted 9,000 men with hobby activities, and 1,000 in military hospitals with educational support.

66. Many other pieces indicate considerable indebtedness to his own policies and philosophies.

67. *SALT*, Vol. V, No. 9, 4 Jan. 1943, pp. 7-10.

who will collectively make 'a better new world'.⁶⁸ His defence of *SALT*, published in the last number on 22 April 1946, was:

SALT ... has at all times been impartial It is more than interesting that criticism⁶⁹ has not been confined to any shade of political opinion and in this *SALT* probably occupies a place unique in Australian journalism. (Vol. XII, no. 4, p. 1)

Other aspects of his army philosophy and of his achievement there may be listed briefly: the innovative and creative use of the W.E.A., the A.B.C., and of various technical and correspondence institutions throughout Australia; special education for the women's services;⁷⁰ the willingness to go beyond professional adult educators and school teachers⁷¹ for recruiting members of the A.A.E.S., 'many of [whom] developed an almost missionary fervour, particularly as they experienced warmth of reception'. He was also concerned with the creation of a democratic spirit within the education units, where all felt 'that they were participating in decision-making'. There was his tireless travelling among the troops in the Northern Territory, and in New Guinea; his establishment of special libraries which were ultimately to hold more than 750,000 books; his provision of tens of thousands of maps and hundreds of thousands of special pamphlets; his commissioning of special written elementary textbooks suitable for adults and his success in getting the Army to accept the Service and then allow it to be built in from brigade down to regiment level. This random list takes no account of getting to continually moving units the materials of what in 1949 he could describe as 'by far the most spectacular experiment in adult

68. This depression-type dream of (Christian) social equity seemed to the political right to be a sign of political interference. As the *Memoir*, p. 20, points out, however, of the 1941-42 period, 'Mr. Menzies and the United Australia Party continued throughout the war to accuse me and the Service as a whole of being biased towards Labor'.

69. Curtin as Prime Minister had requested that the Service be 'impartial politically', but Chifley made adverse comments on *SALT*, and deemed Army Education to be 'bloddy culture'. See R.B. Madgwick, pp. 137 and 184. Despite a number of disagreements in 1942-43 over *SALT* and other matters, Madgwick was concerned to stress Chifley's patience and fairness, adding 'He was a most extraordinary man ... for whom my admiration and respect continued to grow'.

70. He established a special school at Keilor, Victoria to train instructors for women's units.

71. Only six officers were of this type. 'Maybe fifty percent were former teachers, usually from primary schools', but his unorthodox methods drew the rest from amongst the ranks of 'artists, journalists, musicians, lawyers, advertising agents, commerce and business men, radio mechanics, and a host of other callings'; all being committed to 'preach the gospel of education'. See R.B. Madgwick, pp. 129, 131 and 144, and *Forum of Education*, VIII, 1949, pp. 56-57, ff.

education yet attempted in Australia'.⁷²

The last chapter of the retrospective and perspective *Memoir*, enigmatically entitled 'The Commonwealth Invades the Field', ranges over several of the areas of Madgwick's involvement with Federal activity in the general field of education, notably the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme.⁷³ Madgwick's assessment of the consequence of these war-time deliberations - interesting both for the later University of New England and for education in the '70s and '80s - may be listed

'the Commonwealth found it necessary to pour money into education and new types of training;⁷⁴ the Labor Government established the principle, which its successors followed, of equality of educational opportunity;' (*Memoir*, p. 167)

and

'an inter-departmental Committee was set up to review the Commonwealth's Responsibility in Education, including Adult Education; and equality of educational opportunity.

Sadly the revolution in education brought about by this Committee hardly touched adult education. Madgwick wrote some thirty years later that the lack of development here was a 'bitter disappointment' and added 'I carried on my shoulders all the hope for the future of my civilian colleagues in Adult Education' (*Memoir*, pp. 173-174).

Duncan and Madgwick

The Report of the Committee (1944), in the adult education area draws its material from many sources⁷⁵ and embraces unusual and varied evidence. Thus the success of the Army Education Service is set out, as is the evidence of increased demand in most states for 'adult education facilities for the whole community, including rural districts'. It quotes from the resolution of the meeting of the Australian Services Education Council, 29-31 May 1944, a reference to the very great 'demonstrated need for a properly planned and co-ordinated Adult Education Service in the post-war

72. *Ibid.*

73. See H.C. Coombs, *Trial Balance*, 1981, Chapter 2, for Coombs' more philosophical version of these events.

74. Specifically this created new (university) buildings which had to be financed by the universities themselves after the C.R.T. scheme wound down.

75. The *Memoir* quotes from the Report, paragraphs 42-46. Any objective reading of this section of the report must discern both the fervour of the writing and the un concealed arguments from the wartime experience particularly in the Army Education Service.

period' and to the recommendation that the services equipment be placed 'at the disposal of the states', and then cites from an address of the Prime Minister, John Curtin, in April 1943, -

Youth is completely at the mercy of special propagandist interests which are able to inflame, distort and unsettle their minds. We have got to see that the adult has available to him a completely independent source of information, and furthermore, that he has the capacity to weigh it up. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1943)

Paragraph 46 noted that the Universities Commission was preparing a detailed review⁷⁶ of adult education needs in Australia. But the Report was never presented to Parliament, nor was it printed. It is not in question that Madgwick was close to its drafting,⁷⁷ and that R.C. Mills, too, had much to do with its text.

Both men did, however, clearly articulate their views in the volume of the proceedings of a Conference, organised by the Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, held in Sydney on 10-11 March 1944. After the Addresses,⁷⁸ the next paper raised general issues such as the need for 'a forward movement in adult education in Australia' for democracy's smooth functioning, for training in leisure activities 'which are ends in themselves', for the application of science to agriculture to assist world production, for refresher courses, for continuous experiment with the method and content of adult education, and for the need for synthesis of the activities of mind and body in the social life of the individual. One challenge (p. 23) issued to Madgwick by his then predecessor, Professor Mills, was to illustrate 'how citizenship training can be made to appeal to those who may need, but do not appear to want, it'.⁷⁹ (p. 22) The paper in

76. This review, entrusted to W.G.K. Duncan, Director of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney was not published until 1973 when it was edited, with various review articles, by Derek Whitelock with the title of *The Vision Splendid: The First Publication of Dr. W.G.K. Duncan's Report on Adult Education in Australia, 1944*. Department of Adult Education, the University of Adelaide, pp. vii and 206. The Report itself covers 151 quarto pages. The text contains many references to the Army Education Service, e.g. pp. 5-6, 18-21, 81, 85-88, 147, 151, etc.

77. See the 1973 remarks about this by Lascelles Wilson, pp. 152-3, at the end of the text.

78. Including one brief statement by Mr. J.D.G. Medley on the failure of the Australia educational system to 'bring forth a product with ... intellectual hunger', p.9.

79. Mills and Madgwick, 'Adult Education as a Commonwealth Movement' in W.G.K. Duncan, ed., *The Future of Adult Education in Australia*, pp. 22-32.

answer is perhaps, Madgwick's major statement anywhere on his perception of post-war adult education.

The Madgwick sequel begins quietly with the assertion 'that we must be prepared to continue teaching [to adults] for an indefinite period ... the normal subjects of the schoolroom' (p. 23), despite the paradoxical fact that minimally educated soldiers 'are highly intelligent' (p. 24), 'can detect insincerity with amazing insight' and possess 'extraordinary flair for cutting through the non-essentials' (*ibid.*). After covering various experiences in Army Education, he stresses that 'we must never go back to adult education as we know it in the past - a thing of shreds and patches' (p. 25), but rather plan so that there may be 'a complete scheme which will be well designed and properly co-ordinated.' (p. 26)

His second argument is concerned with necessary organization which he wished to be both Commonwealth-wide and organized, at least initially, at the Commonwealth level, with 'some sort of Federal Bureau' (p. 27), responsible for distributing 'the large Commonwealth subsidy' (*ibid.*)⁸⁰ which he felt would be needed. Each State should have its own Board which would

appoint and direct staff necessary at its own headquarters and in the various towns and districts throughout the State ... finally, each Shire or Municipality should be encouraged to create its own Adult Education Committee ... to foster that personal and local interest in local education without which the whole system must inevitably break down. (pp. 27-28)

The rationale behind this scheme⁸¹ was to facilitate the total organization so that activities relate to local needs, and to co-ordinate the whole and so 'solve it as a whole'. (p. 28)

His third section was concerned with 'The Assumptions on Which it Should Work and the Methods it (i.e. this Commonwealth-wide Adult Education Service) Should Use' and was based on changes in Australian society. He questioned whether there was a 'hard and fast line' between 'direct' teaching/instruction and the indirect, such as that offered by 'Libraries, Art Galleries, Museums, Child Welfare clinics and so on' (p. 29).⁸² His

80. Perhaps this cost factor was the single greatest deterrent to the schemes of Duncan, Mills and Madgwick. In this very paper the Director of Army Education had described as 'reasonable' his A.E.S. annual funding which was already twenty times as much as had been spent in a similar period throughout the whole of Australia.

81. Discussed briefly in Madgwick, *op.cit.*, pp. 184-187.

82. At several points he had stressed that intense study of the specific should always lead to more philosophical and universal issues.

concern is manifested for home-making, child-rearing and 'parent education' (pp. 30-31) - matters which he had already taken up in the education afforded the A.W.A.S. and related women's services.⁸³ The last point made in the short but trenchant paper is that 'education for social change' must begin at a practical level and that this will necessitate 'a host of innovations and variations of the method' (p. 32).

In his later appendix paper to the same period's publication of the Duncan Report,⁸⁴ Lascelles Wilson suggests that the climate of the earlier times was like 'the excitement of a first visit to a circus', since Wallace, Mills, Madgwick and Conlon 'were seeing their vision realised' and 'So many hopes rested on that Report'. After alluding to its rejection by the Prime Minister, Wilson refers to Duncan's more modest *Adult Education in New South Wales - A Survey* as being 'a valuable Report on possible future regional developments in New England' and certain other areas, and adding

In 1948 the first section of Duncan's report to the Board was implemented in New England with the active help of Madgwick, now Warden of the University College of New England.

As pointed out by both Lascelles Wilson and Professor Alex C. Castles,⁸⁵ the 1944 Duncan Report had failed to secure the continuance in the post-war period of Federal participation. As with the cited Madgwick paper of March 1944, the Duncan Report had been too grandiose and lacking in both specific and concrete recommendations. Yet all was not to have been lost. As Lascelles Wilson saw it with hindsight in 1973:⁸⁶

the war-time experience and the efforts of Mills, Duncan, Madgwick and so many others had provided, had been significantly fruitful (producing) the steady developments in different States - in the years since. (Duncan Report, pp. 154-55.)

Towards the end of March 1946, Madgwick was demobilized and so it was as a civilian that he penned his tribute to *SALT* (and, indirectly, to the A.E.S. style of a.e.)

83. Madgwick had always, like the first Chancellor, Sir Earle Page, sought to have at New England a degree in Home Science akin to that already long taught in New Zealand at the University of Otago.

84. Lascelles Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-155.

85. Alex C. Castles, 'The Duncan Report - Political and Legal Implications', *Tertiary Education in Australia*, pp. 156-158. (See next footnote.)

86. See also Lascelles Wilson, 'The Informal Education System', *Tertiary Education in Australia*, Australian Institute of Political Science, 1965, pp. 96-131.

SALT was started as an educational medium, ... it has become much more. It has always been educational ... it has at all times been impartial ... one of the major achievements of the Australian Army Education Service ... (Vol. 12, No. 4, April 1946, p. 1)

The rest of the year he spent as the Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Inter-Departmental Committee on Education, and planning for the National University. He was Secretary to the first Commonwealth Committee providing monies to the Universities for research and managed to rescue the *Current Affairs Bulletin* from the wreck of the Army Education Service 'ship', and saw the rise of a Commonwealth Office of Education concerned with 'the obvious areas', and subsidies to the states on account of education.⁸⁷

Thus it was that certain very clear ideas of necessary self-help⁸⁸ for adult education became prominent in his thinking.

Looking back now I can trace the beginnings of a change in my attitude to the control and financing of Adult Education ... [to] considerable autonomy [being] left to ... the Regional Committees ... Clearly an adult education programme which would be ideal for the inner suburbs of Sydney ... would probably have little appeal for men and women in small country towns or villages. ('*Memoir*', p. 185.)

He also notes how he 'feared Commonwealth domination of Universities',⁸⁹ and the unfortunate 'centralization and uniformity which it would bring'. Towards the end of the year he was appointed to the vacant post of Warden of the New England University College and, later, described himself and his mission thus:

I went off to Armidale in 1947 believing that Adult Education in

87. In the *Memoir* he refers to the 'agitation that had gone on for years in Canberra for a University', a situation similar to that which he was to meet soon in Armidale. As he notes, 'helping to launch the Australian National University made it much easier for me later on to launch the University of New England', pp. 179 and 181.

88. Madgwick notes that Durcan, Mills, and Badger held similar views. Badger's constructive response to the pigeon-holing of the Duncan Report is given in the *Australian Journal of Adult Education XIII*, 3, November 1973, pp. 153-157.

89. He mentions at the end of his *Memoir* that he 'was never a whole-hearted supporter of the Report of the Murray Committee and of the Australian Universities Commission just for these reasons'.

the best liberal⁹⁰ tradition and free from political or other pressures could only be nurtured and encouraged to grow under the protection and with the blessing of Universities, particularly, if they could be induced to accept my definition of what constituted adult education. (*Memoir*, p. 186.)

This statement is both an *apologia* in the face of later criticism, and some explanation of 'why I changed my mind and abandoned plans for a national [a.e.] policy', in view of his fears of applied centralism which had become so very clear by the 1970s. It is also an indication that, in New England, Robert Madgwick was all the more likely to apply unilaterally his own unorthodox educational philosophies and ideals:

I knew we had done a good job during the war and I was certain we could do an even better one after the war.

Given this background, it is small wonder that both Adult Education⁹¹ and, from 1955, External Studies, at New England were to acquire a remarkable dynamic and achieve so much under his benign and supportive leadership. His challenging training ground was the adult education scene in Sydney and in the Army, and the personal success which he had there meant that his impact on tertiary education in New England was likely to be both distinctive and momentous. He went in 1947 to a small University College, still, like Mildura, regarded as an 'experiment', and with only 202 students. He was to leave in 1966 a University which had developed along distinctive reformist lines and whose concerns for and achievement in the education of adults were unique.

* *

The idealisms of the Duncan Report time have been much argued over, in relation to their value as prediction, or as a memento, from a seedbed period, 1944. It was left open that the University should not necessarily be the sole provider or accept general responsibility for the whole field.

90. Madgwick's use of 'liberal' clearly had a specialized sense for him and he used it in his interview at the time of his appointment as chairman to the Australian Broadcasting Commission:

I have never had strong political views. I am a liberal - I don't mean a Liberal liberal - and liberals have their own standards. The trouble is they are inclined to become paternal and want everyone else to agree with them ... I wanted to know how ordinary people lived, and worked. (In 'A.B.C. gets a plain man with a tough mind', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 June, 1967, p. 2.)

91. One of his most dynamic A.E.S. officers, Arnold Eberle - author of the fiery essay, 'Last Time We Failed', *SALT*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 10 May 1943, pp. 35-38 - was appointed as the foundation Staff Tutor in Adult Education in 1948.

But for the most of Australia that was to be in the future. Robert Madgwick, by virtue of his experiences, was the man to take to the north an ideology,⁹² and educational concern for the needs of disadvantaged country people. Fired by the unexpected setbacks to Commonwealth approval for adult education, he may now be seen to have pulled back from extending into peacetime the considerable government intervention needed in war, so that major social changes could be carried out. His interest in Australian man and his society, culture and social organization, were deeply sincere, but he was now to apply them as friend and provider and in an isolated largely rural area for which he had long an ideal vision. It is clear that he had had enough of grand federal plans and so was the more able to turn away from central systems to the problems of maintaining locally the quality of life and work and of the viable community and of its culture.

* * *

Conclusion

This overview survey has sought to explain the otherwise almost incomprehensible large scale extension activities attempted in a tiny university college in the years following 1948 and in its sequential small university after 1954. Clearly it was a case of the place (a long neglected and isolated area), the men (farmers and graziers, sociologist-economists and ex-servicemen - as providers and consumers) - and the vision (a Keynesian one filled with burning notions of equity, social democracy and of giving substance to promises of a 'better world after the war') all coming together in a remarkable synthesis of theory and practice, of the dream and the achieved reality. Although much of what would take place might well be linked popularly to the then contemporary and assertive New State Movement,⁹³ it is clear that there were many northern community and educational leaders, not particularly 'political', who were distressed by centralism and who were convinced that relevant education, readily available research and the extension of needful knowledge were the dynamic ways forward for their people in the post-war world.

92. His group - including Wallace, Duncan, Mills, Conlon and others, might well, - in its vision, if not its comprehensiveness, be likened to the Moot, which met in England from 1938-1945, and was concerned with the new sense of direction needed for Britain after the war. Its more prominent educational members included Christopher Dawson, W.H. Moberly and W. Oakshott. (See Chapter IX and Appendices to *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism* by Roger Kojecky, Faber, 1971.)

93. Compare what happened educationally with, for example, related New England political tracts from the N.S.W. Constitutional League, e.g.: (i) F.A. Bland, *What the Federal System Means to You* (1948); (ii) D.H. Drummond, *The Australian Constitution and New States* (1949); (iii) F.A. Bland (ed.) *Changing the Constitution* (1950).

While others might, and would, argue that these altruistic notions lacked intellectual discipline based on rigorous analysis of general principles; that charge would be made in the future. The belief structure on which decisions about a.e. policy and practice were taken represented an accretion of many years of both personal experience and idealistic conviction. They were interwoven with other strongly held beliefs about how individual, family, and societal life should be organised. There was no real existing model as yet, although that would soon be sought in North America. In short, romantic idealism was the core of the earlier 20th century efforts at adult education in northern New South Wales. The educational theory would be evolved from the practice, much as had occurred in Madgwick's early career and amongst his A.A.E.S. men and women.

The investigation of the antecedents of the rise of the discipline of university led adult education in Armidale shows a complex inter-relationship between local needs, as yet a few local leaders who were socially concerned, and a group of idealists from 'outside', from Sydney and New Zealand in particular, who brought with them their own earlier experiences and convictions. While the theories of social action were derived from larger stages and international economic pressures, particularly of the Depression period, it is clear that the University of Sydney's Extension Board and its 'relative', the Australian Army Education Service provided both models and illustrations on 'how not to do it'. Arguably the antecedent experiences of Belshaw and Madgwick in particular were the most important existing resource for the soon to be designated and focal 'Department of Adult Education'.

* * *

Chapter 11

THE EBERLE YEARS (1948 - 1953)

Preamble - Before Madgwick and Eberle

The somewhat sparse files of the Advisory Council of the New England University College for the years 1944 - 1947 make it clear that there was a very strong desire, in both the Council and in the general region, to involve the fledgeling College in the whole life of the community. Thus, following on its 4 August 1944 Conference at the N.E.U.C. on developments in (school) teaching, there was ratified on 30 October 1944 by the Educational Advisory Committee of the Armidale City Council¹ a lengthy document requiring that

ample and proper educational services are available to all ...
in country areas. (1944 Council Papers file, U.N.E. Archives)

Among the many listed community desiderata were: regular visits of the Vocational Guidance Bureau; 'that Community Centres², along the lines advocated by the National Fitness Movement, be established in country districts'; and that there be new N.E.U.C. Faculties of Rural Economy, Domestic Science and Education, etc.

The Armidale document on further education was endorsed in Tenterfield, Glen Innes, Inverell, Moree and elsewhere, and then forwarded to Sydney, where it met a mixed reception, and to Melbourne, where its 'Rural Economy' ideas were held to be 'retrograde' by Professor S.M. Wadham and other purists advising the Rural Reconstruction Commission.³ Yet the much less doctrinaire Agricultural Bureau of New South Wales had supported a Faculty of Rural Economy⁴ (letter to the Warden on 15 Feb. 1944), as did the Namoi Regional Resources Survey Committee at its Narrabri meeting on 27 June 1944. Thus, towards the end of the war, regional groups and local

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1. One may compare with this the mid-1980s similar committee of the City Council at Coffs Harbour.
 2. It was always intended that these be also adult education centres, much as Mechanics Institutes had been and the later Namoi Regional Office of the University in Tamworth would be.
 3. This was a section of the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction.
 4. Since this extension-inspired project was to be delayed for more than a decade, the 1948 appointment of an adult education officer would become even more significant as a kind of pilot exercise.

government were articulate in their call for community/a.e. provision, as was (formal) regional education and the N.E.U.C.

* *

Events on the local university extension front had reached a form of stalemate in the last year of the war, but then they were galvanised by the unexpected resignation of Dr. Booth, the Warden, who wrote (on 1/7/1945) to the Members of the Council a terse informal note, from which may be excerpted:

Dear Blokes,

... Your next Warden and President must be a good man. You may have to put up with a period of 'inter-regency'.

Competent idealists do exist ... you must get one.

In the meantime Dr. Belshaw would serve as Acting Warden, with the intrigues of succession being largely managed in Sydney, until, the position of Warden closing on 31 August 1946, it was announced in December that the new Warden, Dr. R.F. Madgwick, would arrive officially on 17 February 1947.

And so it is that the official voice of James Belshaw is to be heard resoundingly⁵ in the publicity documents of this period. During his time as Acting Warden he would flood the regional and national media with pieces about his College, and its potential to assist the region, as in the two essays entitled 'New England University College - An Experiment in the Decentralization of University Education', in *The Countrywoman in New South Wales* (December 1946, pp. 17-19, and January 1947, pp. 13-14). In the first he attacked 'the relative concentration of power and wealth in the capital cities⁶ ... such as exists in no other country' (p. 17) and referred to the College's significance in 'political, social and economic' arenas, as well as to its 'stimulating contacts' and its 'very great future'. The second part concentrated on the matter of research⁷ in the social sciences and humanities, suggesting that funds might be forthcoming in this area where 'the University [sic] of New England has a heavy obligation'. He continued to stress that it must not become 'a superior technical college for the brain worker' (Sidney Webb's indictment of certain British institutions), and then he turned to its extension role:

5. Summing up this phase, his successor would refer, in a minute to the Advisory Council on 12 May 1947, to his predecessor's 'excellent work ... his loyalty, foresightedness and devotion to the interests of the College'. [File P.U. 20/1 in U.N.E. Archives.]
6. This would, in 1960, be the burden of the inaugural lecture from G.J. Butland, the first Professor of Geography, and, someone who proved to hold views very similar to Belshaw's.
7. This is an anticipation of the work behind and the publication of the New England Regional Research Monographs. (See Chapter 1)

A third function of the University of New England will be that of being 'the power-house' for its region and for the rural community of New South Wales. By 'the power-house' ... I mean that the university must be a stimulus to the social, economic, political and cultural progress of the area. (pp. 13-14)

He continued:

It will provide this stimulus in a number of ways. It can, for example, interest itself in the problems of the area and strive through its research to provide a solution for them. It can take an active leadership in the adult education movements in the area - through helping the man on the land to gain technical knowledge, through helping the adults in the region generally to share in general cultural education, through helping the music and the drama of the region, and so on. It can also, for example, become a focal point for the social life of the community by offering its facilities for conferences,⁸ etc. (p. 4)

He suggested that general developments at N.E.U.C. would become 'widely regarded as an event of epoch-making importance to the rural community of New South Wales.' (*ibid.*) This theme of decentralization he would press vigorously, as in his (unsigned) *Current Affairs Bulletin* (Vol. 4, 2, 11 April 1949), 'Industries for the Country' and in the following one on 'Decentralization - of industry and population; - of Administration - of Legislation;⁹ and of University Education'. The last sub-theme meant to him both 'adult education and regional research'.

Jim Belshaw's early academic life in Armidale - like that of his brother Horace, elsewhere - was Fabian, reformist, and deeply concerned with the life and labour of the people of the region. His home was long a hive of intellectual activity in which he was ably assisted by his wife Edna (née Drummond). The members of his circle were the force behind the first agitation for the separate university and did much, even at this early time, to prepare the way for later regional research and for like community development in particular. His New Zealand experiences had been crucial, and his early association with men who were now in New Zealand's long-running (1934-49) and reformist Labour Government, combined with his active membership of the Methodist Church, meant that he was passionately committed to stimulating secondary industry and diversifying the economy, as well as vitalizing all aspects of secondary and further education. Thus his abiding legacy to (New England) a.e. would be the concern for

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8. Belshaw was the planner for the early conferences and for all the campus residential accommodation, being ultimately elected the Chairman of Governors for the first college, Wright, in 1956.
 9. This was New State Movement propaganda, of course, rather than academic enterprise.

agricultural economics, the outreach to Third World countries, reforming local government, and the interest in the close nexus between rural society and economics. His natural follower and disciple in many of these areas would be N.D. Crew, particularly in the decentralizing of decision-making.

One can hear Belshaw's exasperated voice, and Madgwick's, in the 1949 comment, when the adult education officer Eberle had arrived, -

It seems obvious that it would be better on all counts for the staff tutor to be a member of the staff of the College and for all matters affecting his work to be handed over to the Advisory Council [N.E.U.C.A.C. Business Paper, 29 October, 1949].

While the next section will discuss the work of Arnold Eberle in detail, it is clear that his time of duty (1948-1954) was also one of much frustration and delay to N.E.U.C. hopes of funded rural teaching and research.¹⁰ One of the results of this agonising time of thwarted plans was that the Advisory Council pinned many hopes and projected further developments on Eberle's work, and so would endorse unanimously Madgwick's recommendation (duly forwarded to Sydney)

That the Advisory Council be given power to decide what Tutorial Classes should be conducted and in which centres; and further that the Advisory Council be given [full] authority to appoint tutors to conduct such classes.¹¹

* * *

The Contribution of Arnold Eberle to Adult Education¹² in New England (1948-1954)

Arnold Walter Eberle, - who was later to hold the degrees of Bachelor of Commerce, of Arts, and of Education, and to serve as the first full-time officer for adult education for both the University of Sydney and the New England University College, with his base at Armidale - was born in

10. In 1948 there had been Federal governmental rejection of a planned Research Chair in Agricultural Economics, as proposed by Sir Earle Page. In 1950 there was a similar rejection of a Kempsey-based suggestion of a New England Institute of Dairy Husbandry to be affiliated to the N.E.U.C. [File P.U. 20/1].

11. Warden (i.e. Dr. Madgwick) to Advisory Council, 28 October, 1950.

12. A fuller version of this survey - with the same title - was published in *Studies in Continuing Education* No. 9, 1983 (1984), pp. 56-87. an abridged and modified version of it appeared as chapter 15,

Waroona, Western Australia, on 5th May 1909. From humble origins there he was to become, in a very real sense, the pioneering shaper of what would be, within a generation of his death, the most dynamic Adult Education Department in the Southern Hemisphere. As was said soberly in an official minute penned a few weeks after his death in New York:

Mr. Eberle's work did much to make the University College known throughout northern New South Wales and he laid a firm basis on which his successors may build an Extension Department worthy of a growing University (p. 55, *1953 Report of the Senate of Sydney University* (1954))

* *

Eberle had graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1931 with the degree of Bachelor of Commerce and the Diploma in Education and was for eight years (1932-1940) a master on the staff of the Swan Hill High School in Victoria. During that period he continued studying for his Arts degree as a part-time student, his Bachelor of Education being awarded for a thesis compiled some years after the war as a direct result of and report on his initial work in New England, New South Wales. When in Swan Hill, he 'organised and lectured to W.E.A. classes, helped to organize Musical and Dramatic Competitions¹³ and was the Foundation President of the Swan Hill Apex Club'.¹⁴ He served in the Australian Army Education Service, from 1942

..... continued

entitled 'A one-man open university: Arnold Eberle and adult education in New England 1948-1954', being pp. 196-206, 273-274, of J.J. Eddy and J.R. Nethercote (eds.), *From Colony to Colonizer: Studies in Australian Administrative History* (Sydney, Hale and Remonger/Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration, 1987). Main biographic sources for this section are: (1) Arnold W. Eberle, 'Adult Education in the New England Region, New South Wales', B.Ed. Thesis, (Melbourne), written in late 1949; (2) A.E. Eberle (ed.), *Rural Science Review*, The New England University College, No. 1, November 1953; (3) a 'Note' on A. Eberle by A.J.A. Nelson, c. 1980, 2pp. typescript; (this appeared in 1985, slightly modified, as 'Arnold W. Eberle (1909-54)', pp. 161-63 of J.E. Thomas and Barry Elsey, *International Biography of Adult Education*; and (4) a 4-page memoir letter to the writer by J.L.J. Wilson, Eberle's former superior, dated 19-8-1982. Reference is also made to many surviving paragraphs from Eberle's writings which are preserved in various numbers of the *Annual Reports* of the Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes of the University of Sydney.

The longer survey was also read for checking of detail by A.J.A. Nelson, former Director of University Extension, and by the late Emeritus Professor J.P. Belsaw, a foundation member of staff in 1938, and Deputy Warden of the University College 1945-1954.

13. Later he was to question the excessive stress on these arts in Victoria (*vide infra*).

14. A.J.A. Nelson, 'Note', p. 1.

to 1946, both in Australia and in England, where he was sent with special responsibilities to assist in the social, moral and intellectual rehabilitation of Australian servicemen who had been prisoners of war in the hands of the Axis powers. Upon discharge from the Army, he returned to Swan Hill, having 'refused the possibilities of better prospects in city positions',¹⁵ and continued his community work there, first as Secretary-Manager of the District Hospital, and, later, as the proprietor of a Secretarial Service. Having 'demonstrated in Army Education real administrative and organizing capacities',¹⁶ in 1948, he was appointed, after an exhaustive selection exercise,¹⁷ Senior Staff Tutor, Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, and located at the New England University College, in Armidale, with responsibility for the College's adult education programmes, the first such University-based non capital city appointment in Australia. Thus his work was of unique importance as being done in the country, for country people, with a programme very largely determined by the needs of those same people.

Both the combined purpose of his immediate superior, R.B. Madgwick (in New England from 1947) and the trust in Eberle as a man of significance for adult education are caught in the contemporary *Report* sentence:

In view of the fact that Dr. Madgwick, the Warden of New England University College, was Director of the Army Education Service during the war, and the fact that his Advisory Council explicitly accepts "adult education" as well as "university education" as part of its responsibility to the people of the northern New South Wales, the Joint Committee is confident that this appointment marks a significant step in the history of adult education in N.S.W.¹⁸

Eberle was to remain in that post, working closely with Dr. R.B. Madgwick, the Warden of the College, from February 1947 until his own untimely death overseas in January 1954, just prior to the University College becoming fully autonomous on 1st February 1954.

Some idea of the central position of Adult Education and of Arnold Eberle's catalytic work in the new University's focus at that time is to be found in the first issue of *The University of New England Calendar* (1956), which contains the following sentences in its 'Annual Report for 1954'

15. J.L.J. Wilson, 'Letter', p. 2.

16. *Ibid.*

17. 'Considerable difficulty was experienced in filling the position at Armidale', p. 5, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Sydney Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes, 1948* (1949).

18. *loc.cit.* The same sentence occurred also in the *Report of the Senate for 1948*, pp. 38-39.

(pp. 66-78):

... the first Council formally established during the year a Faculty of Rural Science and a Faculty of Agricultural Economics...¹⁹

The Faculty of Rural Science will concentrate in general on Plant Husbandry, while the Faculty of Agricultural Economics will be the first of its kind in Australia and will endeavour to teach and research into problems of vital importance ... and an investigation is being made of the significant problems awaiting solution in northern New South Wales ...

As a first step the Council has continued to encourage the provision of extension courses in Animal Husbandry and Agriculture along the lines previously organised by the University College. (p. 74)

After further reflection upon the style and direction of the University, and on extension moulding subsequent degree courses, the *Report* concludes:

It seems clear that University extension must play a vital part in the development of the University of New England [including] a Department of External Studies which is an integral part of any system of extension.²⁰ The first Council also realizes that general extension activities in the field of Adult Education and in the field of Agriculture and Veterinary Education must be moulded into the extension work of the University as a whole. The first Council adopted this policy in the belief that a modern University must associate itself closely and directly with the sociology of the region in which it is established. (p. 75)

While the general viewpoint might be held to be a considerable anticipation, it is now maintained that most of the practical work and

19. In October, 1946, the College had issued the 14 page pamphlet, 'The Need for the Establishment of a Faculty of Agricultural Economics', based on 'some cyclostyled notes' of 1944 on the same topic, 'drawn up - by the Hon. D. Drummond and Dr. J.P. Belshaw' (p. 3), which also emphasised that

'The third function of the Faculty of Agricultural Economics could be that of conducting extension work in rural areas ... in co-operation with the Department of Adult Education at the University.' [p. 12]

At that stage there was no such adult education officer, let alone Department, in the whole region.

20. For a more recent general assessment of the New England educational philosophy, see G. Maddox, 'External Students and the Present Crisis in the University' *The University of New England External Gazette*, Vol. 26, No. 4, October 1982, pp. 4-5, and J.S. Ryan, 'The Foundation of External Studies at New England', *op.cit.*, Vol. 26, No. 5, December 1982, pp. 2-3.

experimental investigation in these several fields, resulting in their later formal academic adoption, began in earnest in Arnold Eberle's time in New England, from 1948 to 1954. Although in 1938 'the Warden travelled fifteen thousand miles in the 'North' ... discussing the University College with leading citizens',²¹ Dr. Edgar Booth was essentially a theorizer about adult education²² and his time at New England (1938-1945) was very largely during the war period. Both he and the Hon. D. Drummond had seen the need for a 'community approach'.²³ But, as it may be shown, it was the unique vision of the new Warden, R.B. Madgwick, and the field work of A.E. Eberle, which made the 'extension' focus, first of the College, and then of the fledgling University, an actuality. It is fitting to turn now to the Armidale career of Arnold Eberle.

Eberle's Prior A.E. Experiences, especially from 1942

As his successor in the position of Director of Adult Education was to observe of Eberle prior to his going to Armidale:²⁴

'Arnold Eberle was an adult educator of exceptional ability. It is significant that, while a high school teacher in a small country town, he began his work with adults, as a tutor for the W.E.A., and in a cultural association and a service club.'

He continued:

'When he joined the Army Education Service in 1942, he was able to use his talents for adult education in a much broader area. He was first appointed to Northern Territory Force, with a base in Darwin, and soon established a reputation as a brilliant teacher and administrator.'

There survives a signed polemical article²⁵ of Eberle's from this period in the service magazine *SALT* (Volume 6, No. 5, 10 May 1943), entitled 'Last Time We Failed', which may be taken as typical of his provocative style, as he throws down a challenge for education to be included in 'the plans for post-war reconstruction' (p. 34). The general national shortcomings of education he attributes to the appeal of economy; a lack of interest among

21. P. 12, New England University College Report, 31 March 1939.

22. See p. 6 of his *Decentralization of University Education*, June 1943.

23. See p. 104 of Drummond's *A University is Born* (1959).

24. A.J.A. Nelson. 'Note', p. 1.

25. *SALT*, 6, 5, pp. 35-38. It is stated to be by 'Lieut. A.W. Eberle, VX, 114374' who 'examines Australia's education system and finds it wanting. Proposals for the future'. (p. 35) He may well have had other material of his incorporated in more general (and unsigned) articles.

those who were denied the benefits of real education; a desire to preserve higher education for the few; a fairly effective muzzling of the teaching profession; a lack of vision; and a slavish devotion to conservative tradition among those responsible for moulding the education structure and its content. He feels that the present structure is inadequate, and that the 'school of experience' will not teach either 'straight thinking' or 'choosing wisely', then continuing

Education is the insurance policy on future peace and welfare - and insofar as we neglect it, or leave it to the unimaginative niggardliness of state governments, then we fail as the trustees of posterity.

Several references are made to an essay of Alexander Meiklejohn on the understanding of victory, and he concludes: 'We need thinking quite as desperately as we need fighting'.

The use of children in the work force 'at the immature age of 14, or even before' (p. 36) he labels 'child labour', and he turns from shocked contemplation of 'our undernourished little messenger boys, and our anaemic colourless factory girls' to a national plan which Australia needs 'if [she] is to be a nation in the real sense' (p. 37). His tabulated demands may be summarized thus:

that: liberal learning is first of all a matter of federal concern;
 limited local organizations could rationalize the facilities
 within each region;
 the school leaving age could be set at 16 years (preferably 17)
 and education made free and compulsory in fact as well as
 name;
 examinations throughout could insist that English, a branch of
 mathematics, social science (a rationalized treatment of
 history, politics, geography and economics), a manual
 subject, and a cultural subject ... should be taken at each
 stage of secondary education;
 specialization would not begin before the age of 16 years ...;
 specialized training²⁶ would then be carried on part-time
 during employment;
 admission to the University would be by competition based on
 school records²⁷ [and not] until they had been in employment
 for at least two years;
 and that:

26. This inter-calated period of work appears to be the only Scandinavian style of thought in Eberle's surviving writings. His main cited examples are from England or New Zealand, for which latter country's then recent social reforms he had a particular admiration.

27. This process, known as 'accrediting' was then being discussed vigorously in New Zealand, where it was first implemented in 1945.

it would be necessary to educate and re-educate the educators ... (p. 38)

While he concludes that there may be weakness in and disagreement with these specific points, he reiterates that: 'One thing is certain - we must do something and we must *begin now*.' It may be noted that C.E.W. Bean, H.C. Coombs, G. Sawyer and other (future) leaders and democratic thinkers were to soon take up his theme in *SALT*, particularly after VE day, 1945.

* *

As a result of his early organizational successes, Eberle was posted to Army Education Headquarters in Melbourne, where he was closely associated with Madgwick and had responsibility for Administration (Personnel and Equipment). In 1944 he was sent to the United Kingdom to undertake 'the sensitive and onerous task of establishing and directing an education unit to cater for the needs of some thousands of Australian ex-prisoners of war.'²⁸ His work in this task, and the training of its members was described by the then Assistant Director of the Australian Army Education Service, Lt. Col. J.L.J. Wilson as 'outstanding',²⁹ and as showing 'real organizing capacities'.³⁰

In his 1982 communication, the late Lascelles Wilson (former Director of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney) refers to the 1948 post³¹, newly created in New England, in these words:

What I do recall is that he was one officer in whom Colonel Madgwick and I had considerable confidence. This appeared clearly when ... the Adult Education Advisory Board in Sydney had agreed to furnish funds to provide ... for the appointment of a Staff Tutor for New England's Department of Adult Education³² that Madgwick hoped to establish in the near future. Meanwhile Arnold was to be appointed as a Staff Tutor in my Dept. of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney. (pp. 1-2)

Wilson goes on to stress that the final choice, from among the many former Army Education officers applying, was 'quite unanimous'

28. Nelson, *loc.cit.*, p. 1.

29. Wilson, *loc.cit.*

30. Letter, p. 2.

31. Eberle refers variously in his thesis to his arrival as June, 1948, e.g. p. 50.

32. See, for example, the reference to it in the Report for 1954 (1956 *University Calendar*, p. 75). It was, of course, only established formally in 1954.

on the grounds of our knowledge of ... his tough, uncompromising temperament unruffled by difficulties; ... his previous civilian experience; ... the fact that he was not only a country man in origins and upbringing, but was in effect, a determined "country mar". He disliked cities, he had a real interest in the rural scene and rural people and their ways of life.

Thus it was that Eberle, the lover of simple folk, came to New England, being as Wilson put it

nominally, a member of my staff, to serve in New England³³ under, in general terms, Madgwick's direction, with any help that I could give him in the way of service ... and any advice I might proffer, not instructions. Not, in the circumstances, that Arnold would have obeyed them, had giving any to him been attempted. pp. 2-3)

And so, in June 1948, Eberle again joined his wartime chief, Dr. R.B. Madgwick, now the Warden of the New England University College. Although the Tutor's task was but one of three regional (New South Wales) projects in adult education, it was destined to have much more considerable consequences, both immediate and long term, than the others. As the same section of the 1948 *Sydney University Report to the Senate* recorded

... the major activity of the Adult Education Advisory Board during 1948 was the preparation at the request of the Premier,³⁴ of a report on Adult Education in Selected Centres in N.S.W. Detailed surveys were made both of existing facilities for adult education and of possible lines of future development, in Armidale and the New England region, Wagga and the Murrumbidgee region, and Wollongong and the Illawarra region.³⁵ The report was completed towards the end of the year and has been forwarded to the Minister for Education for transmission to the Premier. (p. 39)

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33. Wilson's account is confirmed by Eberle in his thesis, pp. 74-75. The official reference to the event in the *Report of the Senate of Sydney University for 1948* (p. 38) describes 'the appointment of a Resident Staff Tutor to Armidale ... made possible by a substantial increase in the Government grant to the Department of Tutorial Classes. As a result of representations made to the Minister of Education by Dr. Belshaw, Acting Warden, and later by Dr. Madgwick, Warden of New England University College, part of this increase was earmarked for the development of Adult Education in the New England region.'
34. J. McGirr, whose second government lasted from 19 May 1947 to 30 June 1950.
35. Neither the Wagga Wagga nor the Wollongong schemes came to such early fruition, and their (related) achievements in tertiary and adult education have always lagged far behind New England's.

We have surviving, however, an even more detailed record of Eberle's philosophies, schemes, social analyses, and evaluations of community needs in his thesis, 'Adult Education in the New England Region, New South Wales', submitted to the University of Melbourne.

Eberle's 1949 Thesis/Analysis

The work itself, a report or manual of much shrewdness, as well as a submitted thesis is in seven parts and it is both logical and luminous at every point. As the 'Preface' states: 'The aim of this investigation was the formulation of a comprehensive and realistic programme of adult education for a selected rural area - the New England Region ... The plan outlined is a synthesis of ideas gained from a review of adult education schemes in Australia, England³⁶ and New Zealand,³⁷ and especially those operating in rural areas; from a survey of the way of life and the educational and cultural facilities, enjoyed by the people of New England; and from the experience gained over a period of twelve months spent in trying to adapt the lessons of the past to the needs of this particular rural environment.' (p. i) As Eberle concludes, 'a greater significance has been attached to what has proved possible than to what yet might be' (*ibid.*). A.J.A. Nelson has summarised the first year thus:

With Madgwick's backing he lost no time in establishing an effective and imaginative programme of adult education. In his first year, he had organised and supervised some 27 adult classes in the Armidale area and conducted a Youth Leadership School at Armidale. (*loc. cit.*, p. 1)

The initial achievement is described more flamboyantly by Derek Whitelock as follows:

... the schools of arts were practically extinct ... Eberle ... encouraged by Madgwick and a college committee ... drew on his A.A.E.S. experience as he travelled his enormous balliwick, setting up local advisory committees and what he called 'a balanced programme of adult education'. Eberle had scarcely any educational allies ... Moreover, his potential students were largely ... people for whom little specific provision had

36. E.g. the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges (pp. 16, 30), the Pendley Centre of Learning and Leisure (Herts.), (pp. 16, 30-31), etc. For a recent statement of these ideals, see the early sections of D. Norman-Dent (ed.), *Impington Village College, 1939-1989* (1989).

37. The Fielding Community Centre in New Zealand is discussed on pp. 16, 31-32. Cp. A.E. Campbell, *The Fielding Community Centre* (1945), and J.C. Dakin's article on F.D. Crawford and Gwen L. Somerset, in Thomas and Elsey (*op.cit.*, pp. 551-557).

hitherto been made by Australian adult education.³⁸

* * *

The essential structure of the very dense text of the summary sections of the Eberle thesis itself may be indicated thus:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Part One | Philosophical Background - Definition and Scope of Adult Education. |
| Part Two | Historical Review - Proceeding from the 19th century in Britain to a detailed discussion of British type Adult Education in rural areas. |
| Part Three ³⁹ | Survey of the New England Region. Geographic, demographic, transportation and settlement influences; educational facilities available; the dearth of technical education, and a decline in population. |
| Part Four | <p>(i) Adult Education in Armidale, - a detailed sociological survey, the offered programme and its impact in relation to its community; the inability of formal institutions to stimulate, or of voluntary ones to satisfy demand; the need for successful publicity and 'building of adult education into the lives of people' (p. 70); and a tutor⁴⁰ who can 'make real mental contact' with students (p. 72).</p> <p>(ii) The Armidale Scheme in Practice. An experimental adult education scheme in new spheres; arousal of desires for new Library; selection of initial courses in areas: intellectual, academic, cultural, and practical; actual attendances of 2.5 - 3.0% of the adult population; a strong demand for Pottery and Leatherwork⁴¹; of adults attending classes⁴² (37.8%)</p> |

38. *The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia* (1974), p. 274.
39. This thus treated summary section and the one following are closely paralleled by what may be called the 'New Eberle Survey', J. Powys and N. Crew, *The Learning Needs of the Adult Community of the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales* (1981). See Chapter VI.
40. Here Eberle follows closely the criteria enunciated by A.B. Thompson, *Adult Education in New Zealand* (1945), p. 291.
41. Whitelock comments on this:
 Reports of leatherwork and vocational farm schools inevitably upset a Sydney joint committee steeped in the Mansbridgean dream. (*Op. cit.*, p. 274)
42. Almost twice the comparable figures in Sydney (1948), or Auckland (1944). Again Eberle follows recent analyses provided by A.B. Thompson (*op. cit.*).

engaged in home duties; relevance (or otherwise) of previous educational attainments; these classes 'catered for a very restricted group' (p. 92); absence of the labourer-artisan group and those of 15-21 years; conclusion that housewives, at least, saw the classes as places of new ideas and 'a real contribution to a higher standard of community living' (p. 93).

There was a failure (in 1949) to carry on academic subjects but a considerable re-enrolment in the practical disciplines. New classes which succeeded had a high homogeneity - e.g. child study; landscape painting; and animal husbandry for 'graziers, farmers, and stock agents' (p. 98). Enrolments had increased to almost 4% of the adult population. Critical thinking classes arose from studies in the performing arts. Responsibilities for further development transferred to local cultural communities. Youth Leadership courses aim to improve leadership, and to foster a desire for serious study.⁴³

Part Five Extending Activities to New Centres, Guyra and Uralla; sociology of these communities; discussion groups at Nowendoc and Jeogla; survey of Glen Innes and Inverell; pivotal role of headmasters; likely market for socio-economic subjects, psychology, (verbal) expression and crafts.

Part Six (A) The future of Adult Education in New England: the lack of research generally; lack of philosophy causes pragmatic development; the need for a national Australian philosophy, promulgated through the Commonwealth Office of Education;⁴⁴ the relationship between adult education and citizenship;⁴⁵ the need for more finance, and for a regional and national 'master plan' (p. 124).

(B) The Plan for New England: analysis of the sociological, educational and cultural activities in each centre within the region; the development of a suitably equipped education centre in each main town; to 'establish a balanced programme of activities throughout the area'; to establish and maintain at

43. This was a feature of the Annual Residential Communication Summer Seminars begun by the Department in the late 1960s and continued until 1983.

44. Dr. R.B. Madgwick held similar views until his own disillusioning experiences after World War II. These are discussed in his unpublished 'Memoir', written towards the end of his life and summarized in Chapter One (above).

45. See Eberle's article in *SALT* referred to above. Madgwick also held this view as did Nelson.

least one residential adult college⁴⁶ for week long and special courses; to have control ultimately in the hands of local communities.

(C) The Next Steps: if adequate funds, then the 'promotion of a closer co-ordination between the activities of the Department and those of the volunteer organisations in the main towns'; the appointment of full-time tutors to Glen Innes and Inverell, and the subsequent development of suitable educational programmes in Tenterfield, Emmaville, Deepwater, Tingha, Warialda, Bingara; discussion courses, and residential schools for more isolated groups; the acquisition of a 'home' in each of the four main centres.

As the conclusion makes clear the purpose of the investigation was the formulation of a plan for developing a comprehensive scheme of adult education for the New England Region, a process which identified the following conditioning influences (a) - the difference between town and country outlooks; (b) - 'the virtual neglect of rural populations by previous adult education schemes'; (c) - the previous failure to provide 'for the full personal cooperation of all ... to expand the knowledge and to develop the skill of each'; (d) - 'the lack of research...in adult education generally'; (e) - the absence of adequate funds; and (f) - the tendency to seek numbers as a base for 'more liberal' funding. The plan outlined for New England envisaged: 'use of local "talent" as leaders/teachers'; 'provision of a teaching service'; and the development of activities in new fields: so that programmes should be 'many-sided', with a minimal range of 'the academic, the cultural and the practical', and a concern 'to create new interests' to lead 'the individual adult ... nearer to full self-realization' (p. 131); and 'new groups' should be continually enfranchised, while ... 'Considerable expenditure must take place before the theory and practice of adult education can compare in insight and efficiency with other forms of education'. (p. 133) Despite the very plain style, it will be obvious that Eberle's thought and a praxis consumer-driven were quite revolutionary at that date, and unique as a mode of lifting the mental horizons of the whole adult community.

*

The hard-hitting and cogent conclusion of the thesis and its plan, as with the cited *SALT* essay, is challenging, idealistic and yet eminently practical if the good of the country and the mental enrichment of all citizens is held to be a worthy goal. The conclusion to his thesis

46. This scheme was taken to the Kellogg Foundation some years later and was the real origin of the Kellogg Rural Adjustment Unit. (*Vide infra*, especially Chapter VI.)

underscores the original Eberle definition of adult education, closely adapted from Thompson,⁴⁷ which reads:

'Adult education comprises the positive results of the deliberate efforts made through educational, cultural and social institutions and organizations (apart from formal educational agencies) to stimulate and to satisfy the thirst of men and women for knowledge, to train them in the act of critical thinking so that they may be more adequately equipped for their responsibilities as citizens and members of society, and to promote the desire and the opportunity for self-expression'. (Eberle, p. 6)

In a very real sense almost every further education learning exercise through the University in subsequent years had its local origins in one of the classes held or ideas evolved by Arnold Eberle in these formative years. The outreach which he established or envisaged in two short years covered almost all the places nearer to Armidale, where various extension exercises were to be mounted in the next thirty years.

*

The official University reports⁴⁸ in 1948 were more cautious, but they showed Eberle's formal results in the Armidale area:

Number of tutorial classes	8
Enrolments	125
Number of regular (or 'effective') enrolments	111
% of effective enrolments	88.8

Not only was attention drawn to the small classes⁴⁹ with shorter courses, but the high effective attendance was noted as opposed to the lowest state percentage, 66, for the City of Sydney. Now various excerpts are quoted from his own official report:⁵⁰

(a) It was evident from the outset that Armidale possessed in the University College, Teacher's College and public and private schools a wealth of academic talent, and that the chief problem would be how to ... interest adults in taking advantage of the facilities offered.

47. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

48. *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Sydney University Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes* (1948), p. 6.

49. All covered one term of 8-12 lectures (p. 7), as opposed to Sydney's 1-3 years.

50. *J.C.T.C. Report*, pp. 15-16.

(b) The most obvious facility lacking in Armidale was a public library⁵¹ containing an adequate reference section and a good supply of general educational reading.

(c) At least half the replies to a circular letter ... were interested in the 'useful arts'.

(d) The introduction of craft classes⁵² was decided upon ... to attract a group (namely housewives) who were considered unlikely to respond to more academic subjects, and because it was considered that crafts have a place in a balanced programme of adult education.

To suggestions that the Department (i.e. of Tutorial Classes) in 1949 should conduct classes in Animal Husbandry, Junior Leadership and Dramatic Art, he replied that they seemed rather 'to concern, respectively, the Agricultural Bureau, the National Fitness Council, and the Arts Council of the British Drama League'.⁵³ The interesting aspect of his thought is his notion of supplied funds and classes being used for 'pump-pruning' to arouse other potential providers. His conclusion was that such requests 'well illustrate the need for a clearer definition of the respective fields of existing adult education organizations' and that 'potential students ... are only interested in the very practical question of who can,⁵⁴ and will (organize activities)'.

* * *

His work in the areas of Animal Husbandry and Agriculture

Despite the seeming disclaimer of Eberle, in this 1948 *Report*, of his likelihood of offering classes in Animal Husbandry in the immediate future,

51. In August 1948, A. Eberle had written to the Armidale City Council and the Dumaresq Shire Council, urging 'the immediate implementation of the Libraries Act' (*J.C.T.C. Report*, p. 15 and *Armidale Express* (variously in August 1948)).
52. Cp. 'A very strong demand has been made for dressmaking and millinery, but since the Technical College in Armidale provides instruction in these subjects, the requests have been refused'. (*J.C.T.C. Report*, p. 16)
53. This group was still prominent in the early (summer) Drama Schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s. (See Chapter V.)
54. From 1938, when Tutorial Class Discussion groups had first been offered in country N.S.W., with 9 groups and 114 enrolments, the numbers had expanded, by 1948, to 91 and 1,343 respectively. In the same period Sydney class enrolments had increased from 1,380 to 2,261. Eberle was right to be impatient with existing structures which were proving inadequate to cope with the increased public expectations, largely fuelled by the State Labour Government's Adult Education Expansion Grant. (See *Senate Report 1947*, p. 45.)

he was soon to offer this to groups in 'residence',⁵⁵ as well as to others with concerns focussed on agriculture. As A.J.A. Nelson observed,

These were of two kinds, week long residential schools held at the College, and regional schools of three or four days duration⁵⁶ held at a rural centre to cater for the interests of farmers and graziers living in the region served by that centre. These schools were warmly welcomed, not only by the men who attended, but also by the College which as yet provided no formal teaching in rural science. ('Note', p. 1)

Eberle's thesis, (Part IV, section 2), had observed of the various agricultural interests (pp. 59-61) that

There existed several bodies in Armidale which had direct contact with, and interest in, the rural population of the surrounding countryside ... the Pastoral, Agricultural and Horticultural Society, the Junior Farmers' Clubs, the Farmers' Union, the Pastures Protection Board, and Graziers' Association, the Agricultural Bureau and the Country Women's Association ... (some) concerned ... primarily with the economic aspects of rural life ...; other bodies created primarily for educational and social work amongst the rural population (and) the C.W.A. engaged in the normal educational, charitable and social activities of the Association.

He had also postulated the region's particular need for 'a rural community centre' in a central location near the District Agronomist (p. 61).

Some months later, reviewing in the autumn of 1949 an agricultural offering but recently concluded, he observed:

The Animal Husbandry class members ... who met at the University College⁵⁷ were distributed over a wide range of age-groups, but occupationally they were confined to graziers, farmers, stock agents and rural research workers. The problem of distance, ... was overcome, some students making a round trip of nearly 100 miles for each meeting. But other factors interfered with the regularity of attendance and some members were directly interested in only a limited number of topics

55. This is quite separate from the Residential Schools Division founded later by J.W. Warburton, and then led by Dr. M. Price and B.C.F. James, always with the residence in Armidale itself.

56. These were continued brilliantly by A.C.M. Howard for a number of years from 1957. (See Chapter III.)

57. See his thesis, p. 96. The year had seen an expansion of activities to Uralla and Guyra 1949. (*Senate Report* (p. 31)), and the University Farm deemed to be 'a demonstration area' by the Directorate of Soil Conservation (*ibid.*). [Much later the University Farm would become Laureldale Research Station.]

discussed, and attended only on those occasions.⁵⁸ (pp. 98-99)

Then the group made a momentous suggestion, expressing a preference for a 4-5 day residential school over further weekly lectures. The time and expense involved in travelling were advanced as reasons for this preference. To meet this demand a five-day residential school, sponsored by the New England University College ...⁵⁹, was planned for the August University vacation. Lectures and demonstrations were to be related to the topic - 'Australian Pastures and Stock Production'. (pp. 101-102)

It was also proposed by 'the Department' that there should be a concurrent residential school for countrywomen, to give a foretaste to a wide range of available (cultural/intellectual) activities, so that members 'might discover their interests and aptitudes'. And so

a syllabus was arranged [to] provide ... psychology and child study, written and oral expression, critical thinking, literature, art, music, films, interior decoration, home gardening, handicrafts, chemistry in the home, and education. The plan also envisaged visits to the newspaper office, radio station, Teacher's College art collection, and so on. Enrolment ... was to be limited to ... wives and/or daughters of men enrolled for the Animal Husbandry school, women living outside the main population centres, or the Country Women's Association. (p. 102)

Although these initial schools had to be postponed, their successors did meet a real need, and continued to be well patronised over many years and many centres of assembly. Especially notable was the one held at Walcha⁶⁰ and organised by A. Eberle and Dr. G.L. McClymont, Special Veterinary Research Officer, Nutrition Research Laboratory, Glenfield, New South Wales.

Dr. McClymont, soon to become foundation Professor of Rural Science,⁶¹ had been associated with the College and Dr. Belshaw in 1943, and with the

58. Despite this, 20 of the 29 students attended more than half of the ten meetings, the percentage attendances for which was 72. (Thesis, p. 99)

59. Whitelock records the Sydney distress at 'vocational farm schools' (*Op. cit.*, p. 274).

60. This is recorded as follows in the 1951 *Senate Report*
A successful weekend school in Animal Husbandry was organised at Walcha ... with an enrolment of 68; and extension of the work of the department in other fields ... followed this school. (p. 48)

61. See 1956 *Calendar*. The salary of the position was 'paid from private endowments' for a period (*op.cit.*, p. 72)

Extension endeavours from 1949. He was later to write various reports⁶² which became the foundation of the discipline of Rural Science, as opposed to the traditional/existing subject fields of Agricultural and Veterinary Science. In view of Arnold Eberle's untimely death, it is particularly appropriate that, in November 1953, a few weeks before, he had issued for the University College the *Rural Science Review*, a double columned illustrated volume of 110 pages which contained, in effect, several expanded papers⁶³ from the Continuation School of Animal Husbandry and Agriculture held at Dubbo in May, 1953.

In the 'Foreword', the College's Registrar, W.M. Robb, in his capacity as Secretary to the New England University College Farm Committee, stressed the College's concern to carry 'the results of scientific inquiry to the practising farmer', referring to the projected 'Faculties of Agricultural Economics and Animal Husbandry', and adding -

This development is planned to identify the University more closely with the area which it will primarily serve and enable it to make a wider contribution to the welfare of the Commonwealth generally. These faculties will provide a strong technical basis for ever-growing extension work among farmers and graziers.

As an earnest of its aims in this field, the University College has, during the past two or three years, conducted several Schools of Animal Husbandry, to the great satisfaction and benefit of many who are engaged in agricultural pursuits in the northern and western sections of the State. (p. i)

In his following 'Editor's Note', Arnold Eberle stressed that:

The majority of articles in this publication were originally delivered as lectures at Schools of Animal Husbandry and Agriculture conducted by the New England University College. In preparing them for publication it has been necessary to compromise between the easy familiarity and colloquialisms of spoken language and more precise expression. (p. iii)

He also referred to 'the inspiration to the College and Department from the many farmers and graziers who have attended Schools' and indicated that favourable reception of the *Review* would make it an annual publication. In the intervening years since 1949-50, he had continued to expand his New England work. Thus in the area under his responsibility during 1951 and 1952 there had been 'four Animal Husbandry Schools for farmers and graziers

62. Information conveyed in interview, March, 1982.

63. For a full list of the contents, see Appendix B at the end of this thesis.

(which) ... have developed great interest in the north'.⁶⁴

Other classes flowing from Animal Husbandry Groups may be summarised:

	1952 ⁶⁵	1954 ⁶⁶
Number of Tutorial Classes	19	26
Enrolments	305	378
Percentage of Effective Enrolments	79.7%	72.5%

The last figures were for the courses organized by A.W. Eberle, but largely carried out after his death in January 1954 by the Assistant Registrar of the New University of New England, Mr. T. Lambie.⁶⁷ As with 1948 and 1949, the classes in New England continued to be outstanding for the high percentage of effective enrolment.⁶⁸ Also their length was extended, the 1952 analysis showing: 1 of 3 terms' duration; 10 of 2 terms'; and 8 of 1 term. Both these patterns were based on Eberle's painstaking organization and on the deliberately small size of the classes, averaging: 16.1 in 1952 and 14.5 in 1954 [Cp.: 1948 - 15.7; 1950 - 16.7; 1951 - 15.6; (1952 Report)].

While the official *Reports* on the last Eberle years tell but little of the story of his herculean efforts, some revealing items may be cited. The fortnightly *Current Affairs Bulletin* was made generally available to all persons desiring it on a regular basis from January 1952, wherever they resided. His report for 1952 suggested both the successes achieved and the necessary limitations to the work until the anticipated appointment of 'a full-time assistant' to himself. He went on:

The influence of the Department in 1952 was, however, spread wider by the establishment of classes in two centres - Walcha and Moree. In both cases class activities [in diverse subjects] followed in the wake of successful schools in Animal Husbandry

64. *Report of the Senate for 1952* (1954 *University of Sydney Calendar*, p. 1001).

65. *Annual Report, Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes. 1952.* p. 7.

66. *Annual Report, Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes. 1954.* p. 6.

67. See 1954 *Tutorial Classes: Report*, p. 11.

68. E.g., in 1952, 79.7%, as opposed to the average of 71% for the Department, and only 66.2% for the City of Sydney.

conducted in these centres,⁶⁹ and illustrated the logic of combining all College extension work within a single department.

He also queried the ability of the parent body, the University College, to cope with the interest aroused, and questioned the educative as opposed to the unduly materialistic vocational purpose of many of the students.

However, increasing difficulty will be experienced in fully capitalizing on the wider interest in adult education generally, created by these schools. A further problem arises from the fact that such schools are conducted basically as ends⁷⁰ in themselves, and hence may be regarded as an activity alien to the Department of Tutorial Classes, despite their undoubted value to that Department as a means of creating interest in other activities.⁷¹

A Distinctive New England Style

His next remark was an acknowledgement of both the critics of 'Extension Board' philosophy - (i.e. those at Sydney who preferred only to offer the country lectures on 'liberal' subjects, from the normal teaching offerings of the University) - and of the actual arousal role for interest in all education and, particularly, for the subject areas where the University College (soon to become an autonomous University) would operate

This situation is further complicated by demands received to establish tutorial classes in Agricultural Science - again a new departure ... though one which should appear legitimate even to those who hold that classes should be confined to those subjects included in the University curriculum.⁷²

Of course, such criticism by the Joint Committee was always defused by the fact that Dr. Madgwick had been a member of it from 1948 when he was co-

69. See 1952 *Senate Report* and footnote 52 above. There was also a slow but increasing flow of full-time students to the University College. Evidence tends to suggest a high correlation between parents taking a.e. courses and their children going to N.E.U.C. Cp. Students in attendance in 1953 numbered 142 males and 100 females.' (1955 *N.S.W. Yearbook*, p. 454).

70. This is similar to his reservations about competitive work in the expressive arts. See above and footnote 2 to this chapter.

71. *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Sydney University Committee for Tutorial Classes*, 1952, p. 11.

72. *Ibid.*

opted,⁷³ and from the particular responsibility being assumed for the New England region by a local 'lay' body from 1951.

In view of the gradual divergence of the Department's activities at Armidale .. the Adult Education Committee at Armidale has made certain recommendations to the Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes regarding the future organization of the Department at Armidale. These recommendations are at present under consideration.⁷⁴

Remarks like the last are clear manifestations of the larger strategy for the education of the region's adults manifest in the University College from an early date. Thus, between 19 and 21 February 1941, the tiny N.E.U.C. had hosted the Conference of the North and North Western Division of the Agricultural Bureau of New South Wales,⁷⁵ and it had reported in 1945 that

Recently some thought has been given to the possibility of the University College becoming a centre for Adult Education. Preliminary inquiries have been made and it is believed that most important work could be done in this respect.⁷⁶

In 1951 Sir Richard Livingstone of Oxford, a famed British proponent of adult education, - and someone often cited later by A. Nelson and Z. Cowen - had visited the Australian universities and had given some of them a considerable fillip in their thoughts about the provision of further education for adults. Since the Senate of the University of Sydney had in 1950 granted the Advisory Council of the N.E.U.C. 'power to determine what tutorial classes should be held in the New England region and what centres ... and to appoint tutors to conduct these classes',⁷⁷ (*Senate Report*, pp. 41-42), the largely autonomous body, the N.E.U.C. Adult Education Committee, was much more confident in its decisions. Their policy during 1952 was reported by Ebeble as follows:

73. See *Annual Report of the Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes 1948*, p. 28. Madgwick served on the Committee until the University of New England was constituted in 1954. Other particular friends of the Warden's on it were Professor F.A. Bland and H.D. Black. It may be assumed that Madgwick had a part in both the drafting of the reports of 'the New England Senior Staff Tutor', and in the remarkable printed attention given to the new developments in New England in the *Reports* to the University of Sydney.

74. *Ibid.* The Armidale Committee was responsible to the Advisory Council of the College and empowered by the Senate of the University of Sydney to arrange tutorial classes and appoint tutors.

75. *Senate Report 1941*, p. 29.

76. N.E.U.C. section of the *Senate Report* for 1945, p. 30.

77. Thus regularizing the position referred to by Lascelles Wilson.

The range of subjects offered in 1952 was not quite so wide as previously; in particular only one craft class was conducted. This was not due to any misgivings regarding the value of crafts in an adult educational programme, but rather was it due to the rigid apportioning of available finance between an expanding number of centres⁷⁸ in more academic subjects. One of the oldest and most successful craft classes ... at Uralla - was transferred to the Department of Technical Education during 1952. (*1952 Joint Committee Report*, p. 11)

Other details from Eberle's account of his 1952 stewardship are interesting: the limitation of 'longer' classes to 20 meetings; and the diversion of some classes into discussion groups, as an economy and as an on-going educational policy, it being 'both logical and possible to extend this alternation of class work and discussion'⁷⁹ courses later in the year when the class meetings had been completed ... as a means of both extending the knowledge and self-reliance of the group pending the resumption of class meetings' (pp. 11-12), and the increased proportion of classes going into a third or fourth year, thus indicating 'the possibility of maintaining a sustained programme of work at rural centres' (p. 12).

The Discussion Groups reported on above have surviving records of which the following details are of interest. From the 79 persons so involved in 1951, the next year saw the total increase to 101, distributed as follows:

Discussion Group		Course	Enrolment
Glen Innes	6 ⁸⁰	Modern Drama, Unit C	12
Glen Innes	7	Appreciation of Music	6
Moree	3	The Concerto	17
Moree	5	Economic Theory	9
Tamworth	7	Modern Drama, Unit L	13
Tamworth	8	Introduction to the Drama	7

78. Eberle was clearly a remarkably careful shepherd of the available (state) finance. The placement (in the period 1949-1952) of the Tutorial Classes was as follows: Armidale, 1949-1952; Guyra, 1949-1952; Uralla, 1949-1951; Glen Innes, 1950-1952; Inverell, 1950-1952; Tamworth, 1950-1952; Walcha, 1952 (See earlier reference to Animal Husbandry there); Moree 1952. (*Joint Committee Report for 1952*, p. 12).

79. I.e. with no tutor present.

80. These are serial numbers of groups i.e. from their commencement in the centre in question. The Glen Innes drama and literature group had been working with the same tutor from early in 1950. A Drama group in Tamworth was running for its third year. The same continuing groups would be encouraged in the period 1957 - 1965, as with J.W. Warburton's sponsorship of the literary group in Tenterfield, or A.C.M. Howard's musical appreciation class, conducted by him, in Tamworth.

Tamworth	9	What's in a Play?	11
Walcha	3	Australia's Resources	12
Walcha	5	Books to Read. Unit I	14
			<u>101</u>

There were also various outlying 'Kit Groups', served direct from Sydney, but some were in 'effective liaison' with the Senior Staff Tutor at Armidale. The kits, first introduced by the Sydney Department in 1946, consisted of 'materials designed not merely to give information and to arouse discussion, but to suggest practical ways of learning by doing - for example by reading, acting and collecting materials'.⁸¹ Whereas in 1951 Eberle had directed some 48 students in this area, his group members in 1952 totalled 64.

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A University in Embryo

Perhaps the most interesting account of work in the latter part of Arnold Eberle's time in Armidale is contained in his educational survey reflecting on the work achieved by the end of 1952, the first section entitled 'Classes at Work' and the second, 'Conclusion'.⁸² Interestingly the item was properly printed at the suggestion of the Armidale Adult Education Committee at the University College, and it may thus be seen as a form of challenge to, or manifesto of, the University-to-be, (with (c) at least anticipating the future style of 'external schools') with these points listed:

- (a) 'Classes ... were at least as well supported as previously, despite the shift of emphasis towards the more academic';
- (b) 'There is normally a ready-made and enthusiastic nucleus for any type of class in any centre';
- (c) whereas 'the degree of application of students, their ability and their desire to enter into discussion varies as between classes and as between the students' ... what do not vary in any marked degree are the evident satisfaction

81. See the *Annual Report of the Joint Committee, 1946*, p. 31. D.A. Whitelock, in his 1970 Ph.D. thesis, refers to their long run - of twenty years - despite the fact that there soon appeared in Sydney records

'a growing sense of unease about more practical, less intellectually demanding kit courses [which] ... grated on the sense of intellectual propriety ... (pp. 485-86).

82. Pp. 14-17 and 17, respectively in the *Annual Report for the Joint Committee for Tutorial Classes for 1952*. Although it is printed as a running text, its conclusions are now summarized *seriatim*.

students derive from their classes, the pleasant social atmosphere ... within each group, and the very satisfactory student-lecturer relationships which have invariably developed'.

- (d) 'most centres have accepted classes in current affairs, wherein the approach 'has represented a compromise between what the students desire to discuss and what the tutors feel is of most immediate significance for the students enrolled';
- (e) 'all classes⁸³ are gradually working towards a full-scale study of Australia's foreign relationships and ... political and social problems';
- (f) dual approaches, i.e. two tutors for an evening (an economist and a historian, as in Tamworth), were 'most successful' experiments;
- (g) the provision for students of boxes of books 'which they could have no possibility of borrowing locally' has been much appreciated;
- (h) the thorough study of contemporary drama will lead to 'a desire to embark on a study of Shakespearian drama';
- (i) Child Study courses are 'characterised by excellent attendances and animated discussion' and 'might lead to a study of elementary psychology';
- (j) a mixture of theory and application in everyday life would 'receive most constant and enthusiastic support', - as with Landscape Painting classes being followed by courses in Art Appreciation and Interior Decoration; or with Music of the Ballet⁸⁴ following classes in Musical Appreciation;
- (k) Craft classes 'are of educational value and are welcomed by many people who, for reasons of background or interest, cannot yet be induced to undertake any subject which lies in the academic sphere'

Already there is manifest Eberle's notion of adult education work leading, in due course, to 'external' degree or credit studies.

83. Eberle (p. 15) envisaged that, with a certain common experience, 'it will be possible to bring all these classes together for a residential Political Science School'. Clearly he was concerned to challenge the monopoly of the Summer Schools in Political Science being held in Canberra. His notion of a national a.e. sponsored Foreign Affairs School has, since his time, become a tradition at New Zealand's University of Otago.

84. Such classes were indeed offered more than a decade later, notably by Dame Peggy van Praagh, on whom the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred in 1974.

The conclusion referred to the year 1952 as 'one of consolidation', and he evaluated the achievements to date thus:

During the year, the Department was able to gain a more accurate idea of the needs of people in the area and undoubtedly the functions of the Department became known for the first time to many people in New England. From this point, the logical developments are to extend to the few remaining centres in New England where nothing has yet been attempted, and to intensify the work already being done in the present centres.

Thus did Eberle (and Madgwick who collaborated in the Reports) define the early philosophy of the university-to-be - concern for the intellectual needs of local people - and then conclude with stress on the urgency of providing more Staff and of the maintenance of present achievements. Perhaps the most significant thought, however, is less the last sentence

The Department's policy must be to hold what has been gained and to improve continuously the quality of the work being done (p. 17)

than an earlier one (which anticipates the adult (external) degree student, even as it echoes his 1943 *SALT* challenge) -

Whilst one hopes for, and works for, the day when the students of tutorial classes will possess the background, the ability to handle new ideas and the desire to extend their knowledge which are expected in University students, the first steps on this road must obviously be the creation of ties and the development of attitudes⁸⁵ which will facilitate the achievement of these more ambitious academic aims. (pp. 14-15)

* *

Detailed reports of Eberle's work in 1953 do not survive, although there is a full record⁸⁶ of the execution of his plans for 1954, some 26 classes showing a

strong shift in interest away from economics and politics towards literature and the arts ... psychology ... and group leadership.

In addition to the weekly tutorial classes of 1954

85. One of these was the broader aspects of the study of English language which Eberle saw as including 'certain aspects of the history of civilization' (*loc. cit.*, p. 16). This, too, echoed the *SALT* emphasis on 'English ... as a cultural subject' (p. 37). [A like 'history of English language' culture-shock course was commissioned by Eberle's friends, A.J.A Nelson and A.C.M. Howard as a 1960 winter offering in Tamworth.]

86. *Report of the Joint Committee for 1954*, pp. 7, 11.

two successful schools were organized, one in Animal Husbandry at Armidale ... with an attendance of 50, and one in Geology at Manilla, conducted by Professor A.H. Voisey, with an attendance of 29.

This report was peculiarly important since it recorded the end of an era, coming as it did after the sudden death of Mr. A.W. Eberle in January, 1954, after the formal establishment of the College as a University, and after the regional exercise of considerable significance in the education of adults. As the 1954 *Report of the Joint Committee* noted more soberly -

The work in the New England region represented a successful experiment in a rural area conducted jointly by the Department and the New England University College and largely financed by a special grant for the purpose by the Advisory Board of Adult Education. (p. 11)

Perhaps the greater value of the work was that it affirmed the validity of the ideas of R.B. Madgwick and A.W. Eberle as to the possible ultimate education of disadvantaged but willing adults at the tertiary level.

These ideas are also to be found in the short *Report to the Senate for 1953*:

On the teaching side, nothing at any time has been allowed to react against the welfare of the students (p. 52)

and During the last year steps have been taken to lay the foundations for the Department of External Studies, and a special Committee of the Advisory Council was set up to report on the introduction of such courses. (p. 53)

In the later remarks about the Armidale University College, there are quiet but proud references to the new Act enabling the Council to 'govern and administer the University of New England without fear of interference from any source' and that 'the University of New England will be able to assume the traditions of freedom and scholarship which the University of Sydney has encouraged and developed' (p. 56). It is indeed poignant that, a few lines above, there occurs the following obituary notice⁸⁷ -

A.W. Eberle - The death occurred of Mr. A.W. Eberle, a member of the staff of the Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, who was attached to the College to conduct Extension activities. Mr. Eberle's work did much to make the University College known throughout northern New South Wales and he laid a

87. Almost certainly written by his friend, Dr. R.B. Madgwick.

firm basis on which his successors⁸⁸ may build an Extension Department worthy of a growing University. (p. 55)

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To Re-vitalize New England

Arnold Eberle's original thesis and actual achievement were no less than a long term blueprint for a vitalized and proud rural New England: providing educational and social facilities at natural geographical centres; grouping and co-ordinating any existing educative and social agencies hitherto functioning in isolation in the countryside; and endeavouring to provide suitable and shared central homes for all further, adult and agricultural education agencies. His was a work of great imagination and administrative courage, concerned to assist constructively the lives of the whole community and the body politic, and to express the spirit of the countryside - strong and reserved, with the appreciation of the dignity of husbandry, and aiming to confer significance on every facet of the daily life of the country folk. His achievements were both humane and modest, but their significance was quite other, for he was the practitioner, where in New England Booth, Belshaw and Madgwick had been the theorists and planners.

And thus it was that Arnold Eberle died at the peak of his achievement, in the very month in which the University of New England was established. His immediate successor, A.J.A. Nelson later penned the following tribute to him:

I took up duty ... in August 1954 and, as head of the newly established Department of Adult Education, continued the work begun by Arnold Eberle. I was struck not only by the warmth of the public response to his work and the imaginative, devoted and enthusiastic way in which he had met a challenging task as he made his way as a lone pioneer over a vast thinly populated land, but also by his vision for the future.

He saw the task as establishing a base from which great things could be developed when the College became an autonomous University. But the tradition he established has continued and there are many of us from both the University and the wider community who feel deep respect for the man who did so much to nurture its beginning ('Note', pp. 1-2).

88. R.A. Boyd, appointed to the Botany Department in 1955, and member of various Extension Committees in the 1960s, observed to the present writer in 1985 that:

When I came here I realized, from the way in which people spoke, that Arnold Eberle had been a man of unique quality and of like significance for the institution.

As his nominal Sydney head in the years 1948-1953 would write nearly thirty years later -

He had, after taking stock of his situation and its potential, clear ideas of what he should attempt to launch in the way of rural programmes. ... he was launching a new experiment in rural adult education, on new lines to those followed by my department. Arnold's regard for rural folk was so strong

I had a high regard for him and his determined energy and dedication. ... He worked intensively and his sudden death was one that gave a real sense of loss to those of us who had known him. (Letter, from pp. 3-4)

With the disposal in 1968 of the Armidale Adult Education Centre commemorating his name, Arnold Eberle might be held to have passed from the midst of those whom he served, but he can, in a very real sense, be regarded as one of the shapers of the University of New England, and, particularly, of its unique Faculty of Rural Science and Department of External Studies, by his preparation of so many adults in the New England region⁸⁹ for subsequent assessed degree work as full time or 'external' university students. But above all, as adult educationalist and awareness arouser, he brought ideas, social hope and meaningful culture to so many forgotten people living in almost total neglect by metropolitan agencies.

* * *

Postscript

Arnold Eberle's achievement was an extraordinary one for that time and a successfully developed programme which could, perhaps, have only occurred in the period and circumstances of his posting. While the money used was considerable, it was not derived from his own institution but from a special grant from the State Government of the day, which had been sympathetic since Premier McKell's 1941 concern to give more to adult education, and which was now implementing this policy under Education Minister Heffron. Further, there were still no federal subventions or interventions of money or of policy. The area was largely free of providing agencies and Eberle both had a free hand as to what he did, and was vitally active at a time alike of enormous community demands and of heroic attempts by the state government to satisfy them. His work may also be set against

89. The earlier external students (1955-1965) were drawn much more from the north than later, and many were former members of adult education tutorial classes and discussion groups. Thus they were emerging from a region which might well have been described as 'this Australian professional, cultural and academic wilderness' (New England), p. 3 of J.S. Ryan, *Academe and Community in Australia* (Dunedin, New Zealand College of Education, 1980).

the national ethos at that time of great cultural change -

The essence of this educational revolution was that, for the first time in the history of Australia, secondary and higher education or training was becoming important for a rapidly increasing proportion of the population ... A new organization of educational institutions was under way.⁹⁰

Policies used in New England were free from the various forms of prescription then common - such as inspectors or industrial welfare officers from (wartime) factories intervening in the patterns of worker activity. Also, as is well pointed out by D.A. Whitelock, Eberle had not bothered with the custom of consulting the Sydney-centred Workers' Educational Association about the range of courses. The biographer of the fiery Scot David Stewart, the state W.E.A. General Secretary from 1913 to 1954, commented⁹¹ on this startling break by Eberle with custom -

The new tutor's first step was to organize classes in Armidale and some other towns, and, as he had worked without any connection with the WEA ... he resisted Dave's demands for class fees ... Stewart complained that the Warden [i.e. Madgwick] had 'frozen the WEA out of Armidale' and demanded the students' enrolment cards for incorporation in the WEA records. He declared that it was 'quite a new principal for the Joint Committee to undertake the work, not of conducting tutorial classes, but of organizing adult education⁹² in an area'. ... Dave was not at all impressed by the argument that the New England appointment had all along been recognized as a breach with tradition, an exceptional experiment designed to provide a liaison officer responsible for ... servicing a range of existing organizations⁹³

Then, too, Eberle had brought new many subjects to adult education, if only because of what the 1946 *Report to the Senate* had well described⁹⁴ as the general public's 'mood of cynicism and disillusionment' at the current offerings. He had, however, talked to officials of the Tamworth Trades and Labour Council (1947 *Report*, etc.) and discovered what the workers thought

90. Alan Barcan, *A Short History of Education in New South Wales. A Survey of Opinion, Policy and Practice in New South Wales Education from 1788 to 1965* (1965), p. 273. For the increasing of a.e. funds, see the 1947 *Report of the Senate*, p. 45.

91. E.M. Higgins, *David Stewart and the WEA* (1957), pp. 97-98.

92. This mode of organizing was to be one of the trademarks of New England a.e. and a permanent break with Sydney's British tradition of central committee planning.

93. *V. supra*. These were clubs, churches, etc. and not 'providers' in the formal sense.

94. In its Department of Tutorial Classes section, p. 31 (of the Separate Report).

important - in a fashion to be repeated nationally nearly 40 years later.

His methods of consulting the public, as to what was needed in all courses, were novel in civilian adult education and in some part explained his high percentage of 'effective enrolments' - 88.8% in 1948 - as opposed to metropolitan Sydney's 66% at the same time [*Report*, p. 6] - as did his refusal to be bound to the city's pattern of long-running and flagging classes. Then, too, he was able to obtain part-time tutors from almost any source as is shown by the 'unusually large number [35] of new appointments to the panel' [1948 *Report*, p. 6]. Further, he had a remarkable understanding of the issues of livestock production and the soil-pasture-crop-livestock relationship and so was able to work zestfully with the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture, the N.S.W. Directorate of Soil Conservation (as with their 1949 demonstrations at the University Farm), various stud cattle producers and others, and was thus able to enlist considerable support⁹⁵ for the 1951 N.E.U.C. Development Fund, established 'in order to provide a nucleus from which to develop a Faculty of Animal Husbandry' (1951 *Senate Report*, p. 36).

In every sense, it could be said that Eberle had followed energetically the then revolutionary maxim of W.K. Duncan in his *Adult Education in Australia: A Report Submitted to the Universities' Commission*⁹⁶ (1944, p. 390):

It should be one of the principal functions of the [University Extension] Board to open communication between the parts and the whole of the University and the intelligent public.

Eberle had certainly taken his University College to the people most generously and, as his lecturing panels indicate, had involved persons from the University College and Teachers' College in common activities both academic and cultural in a way never again to be attained.⁹⁷ Himself by

95. As at Walcha School in Animal Husbandry that year. (See above.)

96. 'Published' by the University of Sydney but not made available at all widely for another 30 years.

97. N.E.U.C. names include:

P.E. Barrett (Psychology); D. Howie (Psychology);
H. King (Geography); M. Spencer (Zoology);
E.J. Tapp (History); and A.H. Voisey (Geology);

A.T.C. names include:

E. Browne (Art), F.M. Catt, A.R. Crane, A. Delbridge, E.W. Dunlop, A.V. Jopling, M. Lord, N.J. Meale, N.A. Morrow, Mrs. J. Newcomb, and Miss C. Smith.

Many of these not only offered new subjects not yet taught to full-time students, but were later to become nationally known as educational/cultural innovators, such as Alan Voisey (in earth sciences), Arthur Delbridge in language work and lexicography, or composer Neville Meale.

self-description a continual 'learner' in the field of adult education, he had at his disposal very considerable human resources,⁹⁸ even as he faced enormous need, and was largely free from 'interference', either theoretical or financial. In his own early years he had been angered by the 'irrelevance' of much Depression time secondary education and his thesis indicates considerable knowledge of, and sympathy with the 1944 (English) Education Act. Like it he was concerned with all vocational and non-vocational provision made for young people who have left school, as well as for all adults. Thus he manfully endeavoured to embrace the vast range of technical, commercial and art education, as well as 'such organised cultural and training activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose' (as that Act had it).

Pretentious debates over 'curriculum content' and 'intellectual aptitude' for the courses were distasteful to Eberle who saw the province around him as one in desperate need of a well planned, relevant and integrated programme of adult education as a prerequisite for all social progress and personal growth. Yet he had long been content to ask what was required and then to offer such rural education for people living on farms, in hamlets and in small isolated towns. His offerings were largely functional and practical, as compared with the usual metropolitan ones, formal, abstract and theoretical. He was concerned to develop basic skills and knowledge in a manner which respected the particular culture, initiating various community improvements at a pace acceptable to that community. He saw a.e. as the interaction between the personal needs of citizens and their (often subconscious) wish to work more cooperatively with others. His dream of community centres,⁹⁹ strategically located in order to better assist the solution of social and economic problems, was a fine one which he did not live to realize. In New England, even more than at Swan Hill, he found that life had not become compartmentalised and was still bound by a rural culture, where the task of rural education became, ideally, a total community concern. 'This was most manifest in his hugely successful 'community schools',¹⁰⁰ in which he both respected the lifestyles of the persons in the area and gained remarkable general acceptance of his educational purposes. Indeed, by his assumption of personal responsibility towards isolated populations he was the first of the sensitive and imaginative New England community developers and as such he

98. His unorthodox selection of tutors parallels the similar methods of Madgwick in the A.A.E.S. (See Chapter One.)

99. They were achieved at various times in the later regional offices, notably by A.C.M. Howard in Tamworth, and by A.F. Dunton in Grafton.

100. Their successors, notably in the west of the region, were of an enormous size, with some attracting more than 600 applicants to very small centres of population. (See Chapters III and IV.)

deserves to be best remembered. Yet it must not be forgotten that he had a perception too that the northern part of the state might well provide most of the external students,¹⁰¹ as the people moved on from the non-credit study courses.

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101. Information gained from Mrs. M. Eberle, A.J.A. Nelson, and various student files for the period 1954-1958.