

Song

*Some people work with stone and steel;
Their work is done, we walk inside their buildings,
travel on their roads;
Some people grow and bake and sell
We taste the fruit, the food of earth;
Some people make pictures, or songs to touch our
hearts and make us sing
Some people work with people, and never know the
alchemy they wring.*

*I find my touchstone
In the New England granite
Feel the bare bone under the skin;
Walk on bedrock, feet firmly planted
Find the ends of all my meanings and where I begin.*

*Some people say we have one birth,
One chance at life: the path is set forever, till the
day we die;
Some people say we're born again, the turning wheel
ordains our form;
Some people choose action, to do and dare the
darkness or the dawn
Some people choose to question, and see the world
revealed each day reborn.*

*The seasons turn, and turn again
And sheep like boulders graze among the monuments
of stone;
Each generation sees the light
And there you shine you see beyond the bone
Like New England poplars, new leaves are minted
bronze with every spring;
New children find awakenings, and travellers return
with dusty wings.
(Power, K., 1995 unpub.)*

A large cypress, an oak, cotoneaster and spiky japonica, full of small birds, where cats hunt early in the morning, hide from the lane a white weatherboard cottage like, and yet unlike the other houses in working class West Armidale, with their lawns, clumps of disciplined perennials and well pruned roses. This house has a spinney of pussy willow and pistachea in the back garden and a young plum tree forest growing up close to the walls.

In a way the house is bigger inside than it is on the outside. It is lined with books containing all the great ideas of the western world. It is the entry point to these ideas for a diverse and international set of devotees, all of different ages and walks of

life, largely unaware of each other's existence and numbering in the hundreds. For the last seven years, every school afternoon and Saturday, children have arrived in small groups or singly, to knock and enter, spend an hour and then leave. One of these children reports dreaming of the house as a fun parlour. A fifty-year old adult replies 'That's exactly how it is for me.'

Mail comes - letters and books, requests for donations. From England, America, Fiji and France, from closer to home. From Community Aid Abroad, Amnesty, Sydney City Mission, and catalogues - Margaret Mackie buys most of what she needs by mail order. Theses and manuscripts are sent for comment or arrive with a dedication. The occasional historian or biographer asks for information, or confirmation of historical events.

Letters, books and donations go out - to the local typist, to friends in England, America, Fiji and France. In vacation times there are visitors - a twenty-year-old working in an electorate office, a sculptor in his mid-fifties, a retired public servant, a songwriter.

The neighbours know little of the doings in the house, but have helped to mow the lawn, chop wood for the fireplace and rake the tree-filled yard for years. Every day, the little red mini goes to the corner shop to pick up the *Herald*. Every Thursday it climbs Markham St, Armidale and parks outside a house for a half-hour, where Margaret chats with a colleague and exchanges magazines, then proceeds to the East Armidale Post Office, where she posts her mail.

The lights in the house go on at six o'clock each morning except for Sunday, when it is an hour later. Even on winter days with a bitter frost, the routine doesn't vary. Tea and porridge, then reading; the bible; first in the King James version and then in Fijian, letter writing (many of the letters are decorated with hand-drawn pussy willow buds or a line of hills) and at half-past eight, it's bath time. By nine, she's up, dressed and ready. At ten the *Sydney Morning Herald* arrives and is devoured, page by page. She writes some philosophy questions, or letters, perhaps, in the sun- or fire-lit room. The mail arrives. It is quite an expedition to the letterbox, using the garden fork as a prop, with the money for the milkman to put in the box. Any time between three-thirty and four, the children come. They come to think. They come to do philosophy and they keep coming back. In one of her five books, Margaret Mackie has

written 'Philosophers examine assumptions' (1977, p.7). For eighty years, she has taught people to think. Her unwavering integrity, sharp mind, focus on essentials, constant positive regard, willingness to take care or let be, have influenced ministerial advisers, mathematical prodigies, academics, parents, volunteers abroad, botanists, rehabilitation specialists, religious, political activists, children, children, children and teachers, teachers, teachers. This one stone dropped into the pond of Australian education has caused a ripple effect of incalculable scale. Past students include a NSW University medallist, now a Cambridge Maths Ph.D., a Minister for Education in one of the Pacific nations and a Ministerial adviser in the NSW government.

These children come of their own accord. One child, the daughter of a former Armidale Teachers' College student, has come once a week for four years.

The children read and answer a set of ten questions: 'Are dreams real? What does "real" mean? Are you sure you are not dreaming now? How can you tell? What do we mean when we say something is not "fair"? Is it fair that some people have more money than others? Is it fair that some people are cleverer than others? Should we treat everyone the same way? Does everything have a cause? Harder question. If everything has a cause, how did the universe begin?' (MDM, 1992 and 1994, 'Philosophy Questions' [unpub.].

When they have completed their answers to the questions, the children are allowed to use one of the puzzles, games or equipment - including magnetic marbles, a periscope, an interlocking nail puzzle, a miniature tornado, a 'sun-eater'. Or they could read one of the hundreds of books.

The current crop of students includes brothers of twelve and five with a sense of entitlement, accompanied by an anxious mother; fourteen-year-old Peter, 'bright but bored' at school, interested in maths; Kathleen, just fourteen, often 'too tired' to answer the questions, but she starts to go home, then comes back with an idea about the nature of time or what God thinks; a family of home-schooled children whose attendance is erratic because there are seven of them, they are expecting a new one soon and they often forget what day it is. There is a family of three girls, four children from the local Steiner school and a group of young women from the Duval high school. A ten-year-old girl from PLC comes with her mother.

Two students who have moved away complete the sheets by correspondence.

One boy, at four, was asked 'What is a good man?' and replied 'He does what he says'. He writes to tell, at seven, about his participation in the *Tournament of Minds*.

The questions can be about ethics: at other times they are designed to elicit logical thinking. Miss Mackie draws examples from nature, literature and common experience. Asked how the questions arise, and further, about her writing process, she says it comes 'from inspiration'.

This part of the story nearly ended in 1996, when Miss Margaret Mackie went to the Armidale Hospital for major surgery at the age of eighty-one, with little expectation she would survive. She told the children not to come till further notice, sent letters to her next of kin and an ex-student moved in to take care of the house.

Miss Margaret Mackie did not die, and remarking that 'it was almost worth it to threaten to expire, because people say all the things they usually reserve for the funeral,' (MDM, 1996, pers. comm. 23/6) she is taking up the threads again.

This is the third career of a woman whose life has been teaching. Daughter of a teaching family, she spent ten years in NSW secondary schools before becoming a lecturer at Armidale Teachers' College. After twenty-seven years as an official employee of the college, she continued for a further fourteen as a voluntary consultant. She started teaching philosophy for children when she was seventy-eight years old.

Nobody would now dare to call her, to her face, anything other than 'Miss Mackie', but at her fourth secondary school, Coffs Harbour, her nickname was 'Bantam': she does look like a small brown bird. One of the minor miracles of her physical being (of which she appears almost totally unaware) is her hair. Despite her age, it has never turned grey. It stays fine, straight, thin and wren brown. Her recent illness has made her slight, but students returning to visit after decades find her looking always the same.

Perhaps that is because, with Margaret Mackie, the conversation rapidly goes beyond appearances. Before the tea is made, she has questioned our assumptions and sharpened our thinking, to defend the shaky foundations of an idea or look at a question from a completely different angle. Small talk as a social lubricant is unknown in Miss Mackie's household. If there is nothing of substance to say, nothing is said. Old friends take care what they say, knowing any illogical statement will be instantly challenged.

New adults either warm to the unfamiliar stimulus to thought or retire, offended at what seems to be an attack on their *amour propre*. But nothing personal is intended: it's just a concentration on the issue, a determination to get to truth, to accuracy, with a total disregard for persons.

Children understand this directness; without the defences of adults and with their curiosity intact, most of them are intrigued and attracted by the opportunity to think about questions that are raised nowhere else in their daily lives - that is, the big questions that despite the efforts of centuries of philosophers, remain unanswered to be raised anew by each generation.

The work of the educator is to develop the good way of life. If the comparatively responsible people at school say nothing about how to live, the pupils get plenty of suggestions on this matter from advertisements, films, magazines, television, popular songs and so on, where there is plenty of incitement to greed, envy, and various other types of self-destructive behaviour. We are hardly in a position to blame the advertisers, etc., for the low standard of education they provide in these matters if we ourselves decline to educate in them at all (MDM, 1966, p. 57).

The children, sensing this vacuum in their own lives, are eager to come to a place where ethical questions are raised and where there is a clear standard for evaluating their responses: logic.

Miss Mackie is careful never to take a standpoint on moral or religious ground. Lest you are misled by the bible reading, its purpose is to absorb the admirable prose style (MDM, 1996, pers.comm., 19/6). Her approach is to draw out an argument to its logical conclusion. The aim is freedom of thought. Her engagement is intense: but with the process of inquiry, not with the 'right' responses.

This thesis examines the idea of Margaret Mackie as a 'born' teacher and examines the influences that were present in her background, in her upbringing and education, to lead her to choose teaching as a career and finally to identify with it so closely that it has become an integral part of her identity. This chapter introduces Margaret Mackie as she is today, at the age of 83, carrying on the good life of her own definition, full of people and projects. It includes a discussion of my involvement with her as her biographer and carer and a rationale for the approach taken to writing about her life.

Emigration as a theme in Scottish life becomes evident in a particularly poignant way in the graveyards of small Scottish mill towns like Keith and Huntly, where headstones on grave after grave record the deaths of family members in Canada, America, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. Margaret Mackie's Scottish origins on both sides of the family are traced in the second chapter. Scotland's intellectual tradition was exported along with its inhabitants and, in a sense, Margaret Mackie embodies this tradition as a small fragment of the Scottish diaspora lodged in an Australian university town, whose own origins show a marked Scottish and educational flavour. Within a tradition and a family where intellect was valued, women and men of equal intellect had access to different life choices. The shifting discourses of family, public and professional life had strong implications for how Margaret Mackie's mother and then Margaret herself, constituted themselves as female and as intellectuals. In an era when the main career for women was still marriage and childbearing, and in Australia, where intellectual life was socially suspect, Margaret Mackie made a different choice from that of her mother, to remain single and to embark on an intellectual and teaching career.

The third chapter examines Margaret Mackie's gendered childhood in a family of teachers; its themes are educational and material abundance and in modern terms, a degree of emotional deprivation. It deliberately concentrates on the normally 'invisible' and domestic detail in the life of a family whose head was a public figure, the father of teacher education in NSW. Implicit in this choice is a recognition of the private and 'female' functions of family life as at least an equal influence in setting the direction of lives. The choice of material is based on concurrence with Theobald's statement that: 'the stuff of women's history remains the rich ethnographic detail of women's lives.' (1996, p. 4.) This chapter draws heavily on Miss Mackie's own unpublished autobiographical works (1992), 'A Wahroonga Childhood', her family history (1993) and the family papers, to which Miss Mackie allowed me unlimited access. She also spent many hours answering my questions about every aspect of her life and showed a principled tolerance in allowing my interpretations to stand even when she took exception to them.

The fourth chapter details the important people and ideas of her years as a young adult in Sydney and Oxford. Margaret was a member of an intellectual elite that

gathered around the controversial Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University, John Anderson, whose former students are now eminent in every facet of Australian culture. The chapter delineates how within the colonial pattern of an intellectual elite returning to the mother country for its higher education, the experience for a woman could be enriching, but marred by gender expectations: self-fulfilling prophecies of inferiority and the expectation that a woman's ambitions, however seriously pursued, could be instantly sacrificed to family solidarity.

Two world wars and a depression spanned Margaret Mackie's youth; the passion in her espousal of ideas that promised co-operation and constructivity could well be explained by her generation having undergone these extremes of competition and destructiveness.

Through the affluent post-war years Margaret matured as a teacher and combined reflections from practice with the ideas she had developed under various mentors. In the fifth chapter her ideas on education, as expressed in the five books she wrote, are linked with the accounts of students and colleagues of her teaching practice, to ask the question 'what makes a good teacher?'. Margaret herself believed that teaching was not a set of easily transmitted skills and developed an 'exemplification' technique of writing about education that was intended to promote individual, critical thinking about the issues. In this chapter an attempt is made to assess whether this technique is effective in passing on an approach that could be useful for teachers today.

This account of Margaret Mackie's development and maturity as a teacher is modelled on the direction a reader's interest might take on meeting Margaret Mackie for the first time, as I did in 1965 as a student at Armidale Teachers' College. She introduced me, by making me think harder than ever before, to a world of ideas, the serious enjoyment of a life of the mind and to making professional and personal choices from a basis of thoughtfulness rather than one of fashion or impulse. Her influence on me was to change teaching as a career, into a conscious choice and a vocation rather than an accident.

I learned only during the writing of this biography that many other students and colleagues were influenced in a similar way by Margaret Mackie and that, like me, valued her input more as it became apparent how fundamentally useful was her approach, based on a firm foundation of secular ethics. To encourage inquiry in

students of every age and ability, in every teaching situation and in every workplace where a firm grasp of ethics, adaptability and initiative were needed, has proved to be an effective rule of thumb.

My involvement with Margaret Mackie as her biographer began in 1995, when I realized her importance as a mentor in my own life and that she was ageing. I wanted to find out before she died how it was that a woman without the usual props of family could continue to live such a productive and apparently fulfilling life.

I decided to ask if I could write her biography and she agreed. For the next two years, the project was self-initiated and self-motivated with no reference to the academy, no awareness that the very nature of biography as a genre was under severe theoretical question. I had some idea of myself as a lens or mirror, a transparent medium through which to view the subject in a light that she was unable to represent for herself.

I started a series of interviews designed to take a kind of 'core sample' of her life to date at five year intervals, so that I could have a rough idea of the sequence of events. I devised ten key open-ended questions :

Where were you living? Describe the house and grounds.

Is there one memory that stands out?

Who were the most significant people in your life?

What gave you joy?

What gave you pain?

How are you the same now?

How are you different?

What was going on in the world at the time?

How did you see your future?

What were the ideas governing your life at the time?

I started the interviews in June 1995, intending to ask the same ten questions about every five-year section of her life to date, beginning from her eleventh year, 1925. I knew Miss Mackie had written a comprehensive account of her childhood to which I could refer later. I used a tape recorder and transcribed the full interviews, asking further questions on the phone and by mail. My idea was to capture her own speech patterns as a way of revealing the person.

It soon became apparent that Miss Mackie would readily answer questions about her professional life and had a well-rehearsed repertoire of stories in which she had constituted herself as a teacher from her earliest years. To the questions that touched on

her personal or emotional life she had no answers and her memories were expressed in ideas, not in sensory terms such as images, smells, tactile sensations or sounds. To questions about changes in her own thinking she responded as if there had never been a time when she thought differently,

By December 1996 my interest in her life had re-activated her own writing impulse and she started to work again on an autobiography, *A Wahroonga Childhood*, she had started writing in 1992. She proposed to me that we should become co-authors. My reaction to this suggestion was mixed. I felt flattered that a published writer might want to collaborate with me but hesitant about the influence Miss Mackie as co-author might have on the book's final form. I felt that her own accounts were lacking in life and colour and that if she insisted on her view of biography as not going 'beyond the evidence', we might end up with a book nobody would want to read. I wrote to her that my feelings were mixed and she did not raise it again beyond pointing out what I knew already, that if I used any of her written material I was obliged to acknowledge it. We solved a physical condition making it difficult for her to write, by activating her use of a tape recorder.

By this time I had started reading fiction, autobiography and history and monitoring historical documentaries on ABC television to try to get a flavour of the times in which she lived and the foundations of her thinking. From the Somerville novelists, Vera Brittain and Dorothy Sayers it was possible to imagine her aspirations and the British ethnocentricity of the era. The 'Australia Remembers' programs on ABC radio and television in 1995 enabled some appreciation of how the trauma of war affected an entire generation.

I sensed motives, interpretations and untold emotional stories to which I attempted to allude. Miss Mackie objected strongly to my interpretations of the 'facts' as she related them to me. At that stage I still thought that I could negotiate between her desires and mine; the only actual writing I had done was transcriptions of her words.

In the beginning of 1996 I started interviewing ex-students, colleagues and old friends. I initially approached these people, to whom I had been referred by Margaret Mackie, by mail, stating that she had authorised me as her biographer and including a list of questions I intended to ask if they were willing to have me interview them in person.

Some, such as her old Principal G.W. Bassett, declined to be interviewed but wrote back in general terms about her. Bassett wrote that Margaret had always been 'somewhat of an enigma'. Others such as Mary Thompson in England, inaccessible for practical purposes for a long interview, enthusiastically entered into the process and wrote several very long letters recalling her Oxford days. An ex-student who had become close, Alma Denton, declined to be interviewed.

I ended up actually interviewing ex-students Marlene Sheppard (from Coff's Harbour High School and Armidale Teachers' College), Alf Fox (from Armidale Teachers' College), colleagues Bob Ross and Christine Perrott (both from Armidale Teachers' College) and Margaret's oldest friend Deirdre Hayter, who had been a contemporary at Sydney University and had been Margaret's mother's carer in old age. The questions I asked were:

*What were your first impressions of Margaret Mackie?
Is there a particular memory or anecdote you remember about her?*

What do you think makes Margaret special as a person?

What do you think makes her special as a teacher?

What do you think are the principles operating in her interactions with you as a teacher or friend?

Could you make an assessment of the educational climate and context of her particular approach over the time you've known her?

Did you ever see her in a position of conflict, drama or opposition?

What did you learn from Margaret Mackie?

How did you apply that learning to your own professional or personal life?

In what way do you differ or disagree with her ideas and methods?

I recorded and transcribed the answers to these questions and then returned the transcripts to the interviewees for any revisions or excisions they wanted to make.

Mary Thompson (Margaret's Oxford friend) wrote to me about some of the issues in biographical writing. I wrote back:

the context, physical and emotional/intellectual (I am not allowed to distinguish between these two in Margaret's philosophy) is the hardest to capture. For instance, can you now imagine a mental world without Freudian ideas? As I grew up, subconscious motivations were a commonplace in everyone's thinking. I don't believe her [Margaret's] parents (even though they had probably read Freud) would have recognized an un-elevated emotion or known what to do with it if

they had.

... As for the biographer as therapist, I was aware that inviting people to tell their stories is a therapeutic act when I decided to go ahead with the biography. In this case, it's only fair. I owe Margaret at least two years of listening time from when I was a student thirty years ago...if you have to listen to someone for hours on end, you may as well choose someone with interesting ideas who expands your own. And I have a kind of hope that some of it may rub off; I am in dire need of some rationality in my own life. I think Margaret at times finds it uncomfortable to be around someone who knows so much about her.'
(Power, K., 1995, letter to Mary Thompson 19/10.)

Up to this point, all the work I had done on the biography was for one hour a day while I earned my living doing community development work.

In June 1996, the relationship between Miss Mackie and me changed dramatically. She had, characteristically, been ill for some time without telling me and this became acute. I moved to be with her during the crisis which, it transpired, took the form of a serious operation. During the fortnight I had between jobs, we mutually decided I would become her carer, thinking she was likely to die soon.

The nature of the biography was altered in two major ways by these events. The first was that I rapidly became more intimate with Miss Mackie than either of us had ever envisaged, through caring for her *in extremis*.

Ethical issues sprouted like mushrooms. For a year, I was financially dependent on her and she was physically dependent on me. How much of the personal knowledge I had gained through living with her, caring for her and attending to financial and personal details of her life was legitimate material to be included in a life story? How compromised was my stance as a biographer by my dependence on her, and hers on me? How compromised was my caring for her by the necessity to ask questions that were sometimes disturbing and unwelcome? She had never told me of any intimate relations but during her illness an old friend let slip that she had once had a fiance. I bearded her in her hospital bed with this information. Was this ethical or brutal?

Living in Miss Mackie's house allowed me access to a house full of primary source material. The sheer bulk of this was overwhelming, while at the same time I recognized the enormous privilege of being given permission to read any document I came across. I was initially quite overawed at being offered the use of Alexander Mackie's desk. I dreamed:

The dream I had was simple but absolutely terrifying and even as I write about it the image that woke me comes into my mind and frightens me all over again. It's just this- I was writing at Alexander Mackie's desk, with the window facing north and the curtain drawn back, when Margaret came from the garden and up to the window from outside and looked in at me.

What's so frightening about that? Well I think there is the seductive invitation in [post-modernist theory], to do what I'm inclined to do with anything and that is to turn it all into some element of a private drama of my own.

Secondly, as it became clear that Miss Mackie would recover, I was accepted as a M.Ed.(Hons) student at U.N.E. The biography became transmuted into a thesis, subject to the guidelines and precepts of academic discipline - but what discipline? Is an educational biography education, history, literature, women's studies or fiction?

From O'Connor's (1991) book I extracted principles of what 'to tell or not to tell': 'The guiding principle should be, does the material further illustrate the personality of the biographer's subject? If so it should not be left out; but neither should it be allowed to assume proportions unrelated to the central purpose of the book.' (p.51, quoted from 'The New Biography' in *New York Herald Tribune*, 30 October 1927.)

I was attracted by the model of scholarship and the historical perspective offered by the Tate (1982) biography, but felt it lacked a perspective on female experience, which must surely be an aspect of a biography of Margaret Mackie. From both Petersen (1992) and Selleck (1982) I gleaned models for the classification of sources of information.

Formally, I was required to take on a semester's coursework before continuing with the writing. For the first time in the process, I encountered codifications of contrasting theoretical paradigms and methodologies. I was faced with the task of mastering what seemed to be an entire new language. I sought to co-opt the coursework to my purpose by making the content of my studies relevant to my personal project. I studied *Frank Tate* (1982) and Miss Mackie's own books as material through which to identify different theoretical positions.

I encountered in the reading; an introduction to feminist methodologies and for the first time became aware of multiple feminisms.

Informally, I was developing; collegial relationships with people who made me aware of an entire theoretical debate regarding subjectivities. Drusilla Modjeska's

Poppy offered a possible model. Mary Bastable's (1994) post-modernist, reflexive thesis (' The textual representation of life story telling as social theory') was based on life histories; initially repelled by what I saw as its self-indulgence and exploitativeness, I realised it had stimulated in me the first piece of creative writing I had done for two months:

journal entry Saturday 10.8.96.

I think in an indirect way I am indebted to Mary Bastable's M.A.thesis for unjamming my brain... I started wondering why so many people see Margaret's (from John Anderson) world as so sparse and "sterile" where I see it as potent and rich with possibility.

Then I started thinking metaphorically about it, how the whole of the New England tableland at the moment is covered with skeletal trees. To live in a cold climate is to love the bones. What is so spare and beautiful about the deductive logical thought process is that it is the most economical and precise way to go 'beyond the bone'; the framework is initially all that is visible. All the consequences are tightly rolled inside the leaf and flower buds and in season, unfold fractally in a way that is laid out in the gene design. It's inevitable. It looks sparse and devoid of emotional impact but like a homeopathic remedy, it's potentiated rather than attenuated to believe, for example, that 'mind is feeling'. A very small, but precise and powerful idea can move a huge mass of belief. When I first started to get a glimpse of the implications of Anderson's ideas about reality I had an inward vision of the timber drive in an old Australian film. A whole mental mountainside covered in forest silently folded itself into the earth in orderly rows.

Mary Bastable's theoretical stance allowed expression as a writer/biographer I had believed to be forbidden from academic discourse: its effect on me was liberating. *Interpreting Women's Lives* (1989, The Personal Narratives Group) brought the realization both that academic disciplinary boundaries were under challenge, and that 'a woman's life can never be written taking gender for granted' (p.5).

Margaret Somerville's thesis: (1995), 'The Body/ Landscape Journals: A Politics and Practice of Space' brought a recognition of my own hunger in reading Miss Mackie's autobiographical writing, for the missing physical details of spaces, places and bodily sensations.

I was trying to find images for the intense emotional process between myself and Miss Mackie as I cared for her and worked on her story. I wrote:

journal entry 10.8.96

when I dusted this house for the first time there was a fifteen years' accumulation that formed a thick layer over everything, particularly in the less used shelves in the less used rooms, and when I first started to interview Margaret I got a small collection of slick anecdotes edited for general consumption, and dry, dead, dead. I wondered whether I could make any sort of interesting book out of this little handful of dry bones. But as I dust the furniture every day the sheen in the wood is starting to show, the pictures are starting to come to life and the colours on book spines, in the Persian carpets and the red velvet upholstery live in the firelight in the evenings.

And I am lifting some of the accumulation of habit from Margaret's mind. The stories are becoming less edited, fresher and true to life. There is some juice, passion and spontaneity coming through and they don't all have a point or a moral.

I wonder if I would ever have got to here if I hadn't shared that week when we thought she would die? Of course there is still no use of words like 'fear', 'love', 'hate'.

I was also coping with my first introduction to post-modernist feminism.

It's not nice, I know, to have your roots in the patriarchal linear-thinking mass murdering colonising culturally imperialistic xenophobic materialistic Western tradition, but what if that's where you do come from? You don't have to go on doing it, but to be deeply connected to the rest of the human race surely it's worth following the nerve endings back and look at your own tradition?

I know what you're going to say, it was the blokes who did all that and made up the stories while the women were all busy having babies and trying to keep them alive - but I would rather try to find out what really happened than to make it up. And if I have to make it up, I'd rather not pretend to know.

The coursework completed, I spent time cataloguing part of Miss Mackie's document collection, including a large number of photographs, into an archive. I had consulted with the Armidale University archivist and with the archivist at Fisher Library, Sydney University, to seek out systems for cataloguing. I assumed that there would be a system for categorizing archival material. To my surprise both archivists recommended I should devise my own system and cautioned me 'not to remove the material from its context' and to arrange it in chronological order. Since most of the documents were in plastic garbage bags, I found these instructions confusing. To classify it at all was to remove it from its context. Still, I opened a database and started,

storing documents in a filing cabinet and photographs in document boxes.

I was struggling with post-modernist ideas of multiple meanings and subjectivities whereas my subject was operating within the modernist paradigm of a single objective truth. I became more convinced that a biography of the present day needed to take into account the shifts in world view occasioned by post-modernism:

All historians write within a particular present...Whatever may be one's attitude to some of the more dubious arguments of post-modernity, the power of many of its arguments should be recognised and the challenges that it poses cannot be ignored' (Melluish, 1995).

Some of the writings of feminist researchers and historians appeared to support my desire to write about Margaret's home life and female influences on an equal plane with her public life and the publicly eminent male mentors she followed: 'nothing human's experience is outside history' (Curthoys, 1995, p.8).

I was looking for the omissions and silences that occur when women's lives are disregarded.

The final product is a compromise; between my desire to examine the unsaid and unrecognised subtexts of the life of a woman in a particular era, and the demands of a traditional view of history and biography, that 'facts' can be elicited from documentary material and set down in chronological sequence to express an objective truth.

Alexander Mackie's mother, Margaret Davidson, died giving birth to his sister Maggie when he was two years old. The children were brought up by a devoted housekeeper whose dying words were reputed to be 'Maggie and Alexander'. William Mackie, Alexander's father and a master grocer, on an upward social trajectory from his boyhood in a country manse, ran a shop on the Leith Walk in Edinburgh. Family legend has it that after his wife's death her family never spoke to William again, because she had been warned not to have more children, and in those days the only method of preventing pregnancy was abstinence. 'I think my grandfather then became a recluse: things must have been very gloomy in the household' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm. 24/5).



William Mackie, Master Grocer, 1913.

Alexander helped in the shop but showed no interest in carrying on the family business. He walked by the water of Leith, on cobbled streets through the Georgian terraces of Edinburgh's New Town to attend Daniel Stewart's College (MDM, unpub. family history), one of the academic private schools in Edinburgh.

Children in Scotland grew up knowing the legend of the 'lad 'o pairts', who was born on a poor farm and bettered himself through education, the better to spread the Lord's word (Mackie, J.D., 1978, p.341). In the myth, the 'lad' could never have been a girl (Paterson, in Humes and Paterson 1983). Alexander was expected, like many other Scottish boys, to do as well as he could at school and perhaps attend the University. This expectation he fulfilled to the fullest extent and it led him eventually to leave Scotland to make good in the colonies, another event that was common in the lives of Scottish families. An agricultural depression at the end of the century had added to the successive waves of emigration that swept Scotland from the Clearances on (Mackie, J.D., 1978, p.345).

In almost every way, Scotsmen were deriving benefit from the British Empire... above all, it offered opportunities of employment to the sons of the ascendant Scottish middle class (Mackie, J.D., 1978, p. 355).

Deprived of any other relatives by the family feud, he was sent for holidays to his maiden aunts in Huntly, where the family had had some connection with a woollen mill' (MDM, 1996, pers.comm 19/6). Aunt Maggie and Aunt 'Jim' (Jemima), lived a frugal rural life. Alexander remembered with affection his boyhood days spent cycling through the beech wood and fishing for trout in the peat-coloured whisky rivers, Bogie and Deveron, where in Spring the scent of gorse from the laird's estates drifts over the workers' cottages in the dark stone town. It must have been from his father that Alexander Mackie inherited his love and habit of walking: postcards to the family in Australia from William Mackie refer often to walking holidays:

16th October, 1913. Yesterday was another fine Autumn Day, and I had a pleasant walk in the afternoon from Dalkeith by the old Dalkeith Road. The sky was beautifully clear and it was quite mild, today is just the same so we are having a good October. I have had my letter from Huntly, both well and still enjoying a short walk. They are getting their potatoes taken up this week by M. Stewart - and he quality is very fine. W.M. (Mackie, Wm, postcard to Alexander Mackie.)

Alexander continued this tradition in Australia; every Thursday both before and

after his marriage, he walked in Kuringai Chase with his best friend, Dr Gordon McLeod.

When Alexander was fifteen he met his friend George Mill in the street. George was on his way to take the pupil teachers' examination; Alexander decided to go along.

*'Tis not believe me a wise man's part to say " I shall live."
Tomorrow's life is too late; live today* (Martial, in Mackie,
Alexander, 1894, Latin exercise book).

One of them came first and the other second in the exam. Both of them became pupil teachers.

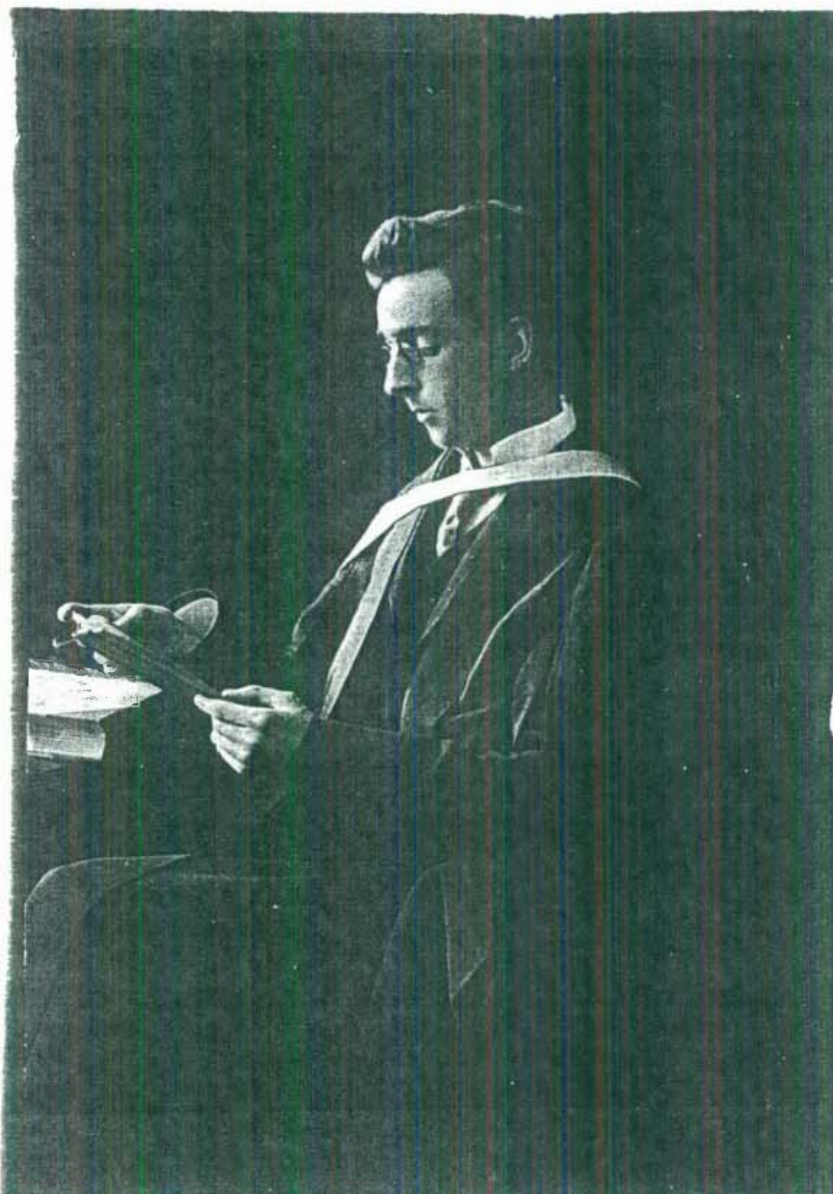


Pupil teacher with unknown friend.

Alexander Mackie started at sixteen at the Canonmills School in Edinburgh. He taught in 'gallery' classrooms (with tiered seating), up to ninety children in a single room, for four years, and as one of the promising pupil teachers, was selected for training at Moray House, the Edinburgh teacher training institution.

At the same time he completed an Arts degree at Edinburgh University. In doing so he was entering a tradition of intellectual life ' based on a concept of liberal education far

older than the oldest of the British universities' (Walker, 1994, p.13). He graduated M.A. in 1900 with First Class Honours. In 1899 he gained medals for the subjects of Logic and Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy and in 1900 for Commercial and Political Economy and Mercantile Law (Edinburgh University Calendar,1900). His success was gained in both traditional and forward - looking disciplines.



Alexander Mackie, M.A.(Edinburgh), 1899.

Scotland's universities were at the tail end of their⁴ renaissance':

'the greatest explosion of all-round creative genius ever witnessed in the British Isles took place in Scotland in the

latter half of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth... the men who collectively created this intellectual miracle were for the most part educated in Scotland's universities' (Walker, 1994, p.60).

Alexander Mackie was among the last group of students who were required to study Latin, Greek and Philosophy in their first year to establish a 'broad base' from which they could later specialize. 1899, the year of Alexander Mackie's birth, also saw the legislation which allowed women to be admitted to Scottish universities (Mackie, J.D., 1978, p.340).

The following excerpt from Alexander Mackie's university notes illustrates a little of the emergence of the new social sciences at around this time and pre-dates by over ten years the publications of Freud:

Logic even in the widest sense deals only with Thought or Knowledge; not with the phen^a of Feeling and Volition. Psychology deals with all mental phen^a. (Mackie, A, c.1899, University notebooks).

The excerpt could also be a pointer to the Australian branch of the Mackie family's trait of subordination of emotion to logic. Rather than a family of teachers, it could be said that they regarded themselves as a family of philosophers, basing their actions on reason.

Professor S.S.Laurie, author of *Lectures on the Rise and Early Constitution of Universities* (1886) and the first Professor of Education in the British Isles, was a teacher and mentor of Alexander Mackie. Laurie embodied what Walker (1994) termed the 'Scottish school of commonsense philosophy'. His contention was 'the realities of life, not the form of words or trick of phrase or felicity of construction, were to be the preparation of a good... [professional]' (Laurie, 1886, quoted in Walker, 1994, p.15). Alexander Mackie, with a solid grounding in practical teaching, and later Margaret, inherited a similar approach. The whole family embodied... "the philosophical itch to dispute all things" and the "belief in reason" identified as traits fostered in a Scottish education by Walker (1994, p. 17).

Education in Scottish universities at the time of Laurie's appointment could be said to be a 'Cinderella' discipline, the Professors' salaries being lower than those of their colleagues in the faculty of Arts and the status of their subject being outside the ambit of the regular Arts degree (Bell, 1984 in Humes & Paterson, 1984, p.156). As a University medallist Alexander Mackie could be presumed to have been in a position to choose a more

prestigious or lucrative career. The fact that he remained a teacher may indicate that he, like his daughter to follow, had discovered in himself the gift of awakening the minds of others and regarded his profession as an end in itself rather than as purely a stepping stone for his own ambitions.

Mackie, like his mentor, was to become a founding Professor of Education, at the University of Sydney. His beliefs about the purpose of education are summarised in his book, *The Groundwork of Teaching* (1919, p.11):

...The child's welfare or happiness is conceived to consist in the attainment of moral character, in being fitted for life or livelihood, in being a good citizen, in growing into a harmonious personality, or in self realisation...Put in this way, the problem of education is identical with the problem of human happiness and welfare in general, and this is the central problem of the studies known as ethics and politics.

In Sydney, a push to establish a school of education at the University was being supported by another Laurie disciple, Percy Robin, classics master at Newington College. In 1892 he presented a paper to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science advocating professional training of secondary teachers, which was taken up by Professor Scott to support his own advocacy in this direction to the University Senate (Turney, Bygott & Chippendale, 1997, pp 289-290).

In Scotland Alexander Mackie was advancing rapidly in his profession and just two years after his graduation was appointed at 26 as a lecturer at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

A pointer to Alexander's seriousness, formality and perhaps a touch of pedantry is a set of model rules in the family papers, in his small precise handwriting, for an organisation named 'The Informal Club'. The purpose of the club was 'reading and hearing papers and holding discussions' (Mackie family papers). Was a formal constitution needed for such a group? In the spirit of the times the membership was confined to men students. There is a possibility that he had already formed formal and 'bachelor' habits of life that would later contribute to the hiatus in communication in his marriage.

He was lecturing in Education at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, when the NSW authorities decided to advertise worldwide for a new Principal to head Sydney Teachers' College.

His experience tallied with the NSW authorities' needs for a reforming Principal:

During the initial years of the twentieth century the need to reform the entire education system in New South Wales was acknowledged by many members of the education profession, government and the community (Boardman et al, 1995, p.22).

Mackie's brief within this general movement was to replace the pupil-teacher training system with the 'previous training' of teachers, a move paralleled in Scotland in the same year (Bell, in Humes & Paterson, 1983, p.152).

The family story of his appointment, at the age of thirty, 'with impeccable academic attainments, deep commitment to his task, a forceful drive and ambition, and a fearless attitude towards higher authority' (Kemp, 1981) was told to Margaret by his aunt Jemima - 'Jim' Mackie, during a visit to Scotland in 1967: 'They needed a principal for the new college in Australia, and they looked in America and they looked in England and they looked in Scotland. And they found Alexander.' (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history.)

Turney, Bygott and Chippendale (1991, pp. 400-401) tell a slightly different story, that the field of applicants was limited by the modest salary and that Alexander Mackie claimed that his decision to accept the principalship was influenced by an assurance that he would soon be appointed to a new Chair in Education.

He was expected to co-operate with and help to lead a general move in NSW education towards broader and more 'professionally' educated secondary and tertiary students, which might be said to have started five years earlier in 1901, when at a conference of the NSW Public School Teachers' Association, Professor of Philosophy, Francis Anderson of Sydney University, criticised the 'mechanical, stereotyped teaching' in schools and suggested that a remedy could lie in improved teacher training (Turney, Bygott & Chippendale, 1991, p. 396).

Miss Elizabeth Skillen, a lecturer in English and the only staff member younger than the new Principal, reported to his daughter that the first thing Alexander Mackie said to the assembled staff was 'Round this table, all voices are equal' (MDM, 1996, pers. comm. 19/6). This democratic, participatory and liberal attitude to leadership was appreciated by many of his staff, whose loyalty was to be tested by some of his later battles with authority.

His stature as a practitioner was such that he gained the lasting affection and respect of his students. Dymphna Cusack, a forerunner of Margaret Mackie's who was critical of other aspects of teacher training at Sydney Teachers' College, wrote:

The one really useful course was that in the practice of teaching by the head of the college, a nice little Scotsman who deserved to be immortalised by having a training college named after him, even if it was one with all the defects that afflicted most training colleges anywhere at the time (1991, p. 45).

One of Alexander Mackie's first tasks on arrival in Australia in 1906 was to give out the prizes at the Sydney Girls' High School end of year ceremony. A beautiful and brilliant student, Annie Burnett Duncan, came up to collect her prizes and family legend has it that Alexander Mackie decided then that she was the girl he wanted to marry.

'My mother... was born in the Sydney seaside suburb of Manly, the eldest of three children', wrote Margaret Mackie (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history). Annie's brother and sister were also involved in education. Mary, a teacher, married a Professor at Sydney University and Stuart, himself a manual arts teacher, married another teacher.

My mother... was a beautiful and brilliant child... She attended first a little school conducted by two Scotswomen, but found in talking to children from the State school that they were ahead of her in their lessons. She therefore asked to be sent to Manly Public School where she completed her primary schooling. The teaching methods of the time relied heavily on memorisation. Annie learned physiology without realising that it referred to her own bodily processes. The children sat on benches, their arms placed first in front and then, for variation, behind them as the teacher gave oral instruction. The curriculum included elementary French. From this school my mother won a scholarship to Sydney Girls' High at a time when there were seven scholarships awarded in New South Wales. (Mackie, M., 1992, unpub., family history.)

1906, the first year of Alexander's Principalship of Sydney Teachers' College, was Annie's matriculation year. Mrs Garvin, the Principal of Sydney Girls' High, was engaged in a battle with inspector and later acting director-general Frederick Bridges, whose inspection report of 1903 stated that she 'had converted the school into a coaching institution, and the aim of a wide culture is therefore sacrificed.' (Bridges, 1903, quoted in Theobald, 1996, p.125).

This may account for the Duncan family story that Annie was discouraged from sitting for her matriculation by Mrs Garvin, who 'didn't want her "gels" to ruin their female constitutions by studying for examinations' (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

Sydney University Women's College had opened only eleven years before, in 1892 (Turney, Bygott & Chippendale, 1991; Hole, W. Vere and Treweeke, Anne. H., 1953), so the idea of female graduates was relatively new.

Annie B. Duncan sat the exam privately and did matriculate brilliantly. She was awarded a three-year bursary (free tuition and 20 pounds per year) to Sydney University.

An indication of how strongly the discourses of gender could affect life choices was a relatively minor incident that could well have truncated Annie's university career. Her beauty was such that, as a child in Manly, she had had to change her walking route to school because of the number of adults who stopped her to admire her 'high' Scottish complexion and, above all, her richly coloured auburn hair. Shortly before the university term began, Annie contracted ringworm on her scalp; the standard cure was to shave off all the patient's hair. Annie flatly refused to entertain the thought of attending university with a shaved head and another treatment was found (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history). With such value placed on appearance it is easier to understand her later depth of disappointment in giving birth to a 'plain' daughter.

At Sydney Annie gained a B.A. with First Class Honours in French and German and was interviewed with a view to being awarded a travelling scholarship to study in Germany and France. Although she pointed out that she had no immediate marriage plans, it was explained to her that as she was a girl, she would only get married and waste the opportunity (MDM, 1996, pers. comm. 19/6). The prize was given to an able young man called Alan Chisholm who lectured at Sydney Teachers' College on his return from 'the Great War' and subsequently became Professor of French at Melbourne University (Sullivan, M., 1994, p.73).

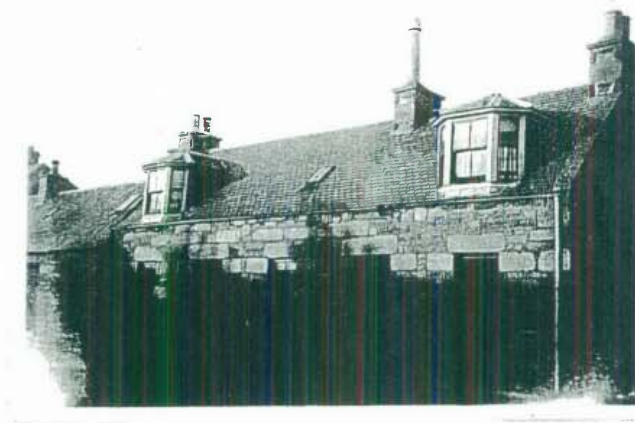
Her sex protected Annie from the risks of direct participation in war but restricted the choice and duration of her professional life. In becoming a teacher, she would inevitably come back into contact with the man who had presented her school prizes four years before.

Annie taught for a short time at a private school on the North Shore line, did not like the work and applied to enter the then novel Diploma of Education course for graduates. The Diploma of Education was a university award and my father was now Professor of Education. The course was conducted in the then Teachers' College, situated in Blackfriars' building, Newtown... One day Annie noticed a picture, the first of what was to become a good collection, in the corridor. She exclaimed loudly and my father emerged

from the room in which he was lecturing and reprimanded her, an incident which she never forgot... Having obtained her Dip.Ed. Annie taught for a year at Fort Street Girls' High. She was then appointed to the Teachers' College as lecturer in French. With other staff members she attended picnics and other social events at which Alexander was present, and in 1913 they married. She was twenty-one and he thirty-seven (MDM, unpub., A Wahroonga Childhood).

Annie Burnett Duncan's parents, Margaret Mackie's maternal grandparents, the Duncan side of the family, both came from Keith, a Scottish town just a day's walk away from Alexander Mackie's aunts in Huntly. They had first met in 1880, on the *John Elder*, on the six month journey out to Australia from Scotland. Jessie Stuart, 'the sensible one' of her family, was accompanying her sister Mary, 'the clever one', a 'lady learned in' the Arts from the university of Aberdeen, which allowed women to attend but did not allow them to graduate. They were travelling second class as befitted their status.

John Duncan, the seventh and last son in a family of seven brothers, travelling 'steerage', had been born in a one-roomed farmhouse and although he was a 'lad'o pairts', had been able to attend school only in winter because his labour was needed on the farm.



100 Moss St, Keith, where John Duncan was born.

Unlike the emigration of Alexander Mackie, the Duncans' emigration was one of economic necessity rather than of seeking advancement. John's apprenticeship to a shoemaker was forced on him against his wishes because of his family's desire for him to learn a trade; as the seventh son there was no livelihood for him at the farm. The Stuart girls were on the *John Elder* as an indirect result of the rural depression. Their father, who ran the bakehouse in Keith, had supported local farmers by refusing to buy the cheap Canadian wheat that was flooding British markets. His bread was consequently a penny a loaf dearer; the falling off in business meant he could no longer help to support his young daughters (Jessie, who left school at 11, had been dressmaking for a living).

John set up as a shoemaker in Manly; Jessie worked as a dressmaker, while her sister Mary became a schoolteacher. The shoemaking and mending business was successful for a short time while the new Catholic convent was being built, because the workmen came in to have their boots repaired. When the convent was completed, business diminished and John Duncan was offered office work by a customer who had been impressed by his intelligence.

It could have been music that brought John Duncan and Jessie Stuart together. On the voyage to Australia the girls had attracted attention for their singing ability, while John had been the cantor in the Free Presbyterian church back in Keith. It was considered sinful to use musical instruments to praise the Lord, so the best singer in the village was given the job of leading the singing on the Sabbath.

Of John Duncan's six brothers and several cousins, two became schoolteachers. Others travelled to Ceylon and made their fortunes, replacing their mother's cottage with a fine house on the Broomhill Rd, the most prosperous street in Keith, looking out over the distillery and the River Isla to the green hills and grey stone villages beyond.

John Duncan once said, when he was asked about the reason he had emigrated, that 'there was a time when the question was never asked why a man would leave his native land' (MDM, pers.comm., 1997, 14/2). There was an element of shame in the poverty he had grown up in and a corresponding pride in his subsequent success. He was an autodidact with a great respect for learning; he eventually became the manager of the Sydney Ferry Company.

Jessie Duncan had 'the sight.' One morning at breakfast in Manly she told her

children 'Your grandfather died last night'. When her husband asked her how she could possibly know, she said 'I dreamed it. I saw them carrying the coffin through the bakehouse.' When her family expressed disbelief she said 'Well, we'll just mark the date on the calendar and wait and see.' When the mail came from Scotland weeks later her 'vision' was confirmed; her father had died on the date she had 'seen'. Margaret Mackie, completely contrary to her usual super-rationality, was convinced that both she and her brother John had inherited this trait because of strong and accurate premonitions they both experienced (MDM, 1992, unpub., family history).

The seventh son married the girl with 'the sight', but apart from their regular attendance at the Free Presbyterian church every Sunday, there was no reliance on the supernatural. The family made good through the exercise of frugality, hard work and intelligence. In Margaret Mackie's generation all had university degrees save one, who was gifted mechanically and became a manual arts teacher. John Duncan was particularly proud of Margaret's brother John, who closed a circle of emigration by returning to England and becoming a world renowned philosopher at that doyen of universities, Oxford.

There was in Sydney a strong subculture of Scots to which the Duncan family contributed by maintaining the links they had formed on the *John Elder* and by entertaining new Scottish arrivals in the country. It was in this way that Annie had become friendly with John Christie Wright, the artist and sculptor whose death in the Great War occasioned her such distress that it formed the substance of her daughter's first conscious memory. From this group were drawn an impressive proportion of Sydney's intellectual elite. At the time of Alexander Mackie's appointment, Scots occupied half the Chairs at Sydney University (Turney, Bygott & Chippendale, 1991, p. 639).

It was the age of belief in reason, technology and enlightenment through science, the new religion which seemed to be a solution to human problems only because human behaviour was still governed by the social mores of an earlier, upright age. People like Alexander Mackie believed in social evolution towards a kinder, more just and abundant society. Education was the key because it was now possible through scientific inquiry to operate on a basis of accurate knowledge even in complex social issues through the new social sciences.

from Alexander Mackie's diary:

1912. Wednesday 20th [November]
Tea at Farmer's with A.B.D. Walked from the top of William Street by Eliz. Bay, Rushcutters Bay to [Double] Bay. The great question. Wrote to A.B.D. in the evening
 ...

Saturday 30th.
Met A.B.D. after picnic at Athol. A.B.D. agrees to engagement.
 ...

Sunday 1st Dec.
Went to St George's Free Church Castlereagh St.

Monday 2nd Dec.
Spent evening with A.B.D at Manly - agrees to definite engagement.
 ...

Dec.13th.
College closed. Announced engagement at staff meeting.
 (Mackie, Alexander, 1912, diary entries)

from Annie B.Duncan's diary:

December 30th.
Sitting in morning: lunch at Civil Service: home: "Milestones" in evening with Mr and Mrs Nolan and Dr McLeod. Were recipients of good advice during the all - too - long intervals of the play.
 (Duncan, Annie B., 1912, diary entry)

The 'sitting' referred to John Christie Wright's work on a bust of Annie, which was presented to the Teachers' College by Margaret Mackie in 1979.

23.1.13 Thursday
...in the evening A.M. with McLeod at Faust: ABD at Madrigal practice.
 ...

24.1.13
Burns anniversary concert in evening at which Madrigal choir sang.
 (Duncan, Annie B., 1913 diary entries)

In 1913, Alexander Mackie must have been a happy man. Annie Burnet Duncan had consented to be his wife; he had been appointed as Professor of Education at Sydney University and had developed a cordial and effective working relationship with his compatriot Director of Education, Peter Board, to reform the secondary education system in NSW. It was Mackie's staff who wrote the curricula that were to form the basis for the introduction of universal secondary education. He had also made a formidable enemy.

Mackie's first clash with the Chief Inspector, S.H. Smith, had occurred when Smith, dressed in frock coat and top hat, had appeared to invigilate the examinations at the new Teachers' College. Alexander Mackie, concerned to establish the professionalism and independence of his domain, had assured Smith that the examinations were being satisfactorily supervised by his staff and wished him good day. 'You could see the hatred coming over S.H. Smith's face' reported Elizabeth Skillen to his daughter many years later (MDM, 1996, pers.comm., 19/6) The basis of their enmity was believed in the Mackie family to be S.H. Smith's feelings of inferiority at not having gained a University degree; his entry into teaching had occurred as a pupil teacher. This argument fails to take into account that Mackie had started in exactly the same way. If it is true, Mackie's intellectual arrogance certainly fuelled the dispute. His minute to the Director in 1927, legitimately protesting at Smith's interference in the college, cast aspersions on Smith's capacity and 'qualifications' and led to a short suspension. Smith, 'a practical man with a bureaucratic mind' (Boardman et al., 1995, p.106), represented an 'old guard' which was opposed to the 'elitism' represented by Mackie's approach to teacher education, which rather than passing on the skills of rote learning, assumed that teachers must be themselves educated and cultured people in order to educate children adequately. The feud continued till the end of Mackie's career and was 'won' by Smith when the political climate changed and he was appointed Director-General of Education on Peter Board's retirement. Mackie was refused the extra superannuation to which he had contributed as both Principal of the Teachers' College and Professor of Education. The regulation that prevented his claim was changed for the next Principal.

Alexander and Annie's marriage took place at the end of 1913. Margaret was born a year later in Neutral Bay and the family house, 'Drumgrain', at Wahroonga, at that time a fairly remote semi-rural suburb on the Northern rail line, was built in 1915. The Sydney Harbour Bridge had not yet been built so that Alexander's journey to work across the harbour included a daily ferry ride. Margaret's childhood was relatively isolated from other children except for her brother John, three years younger, although she was the second grandchild of her generation and saw something of her cousins.

Margaret was home schooled till the age of nine, went to school at Abbotsleigh, won an exhibition to attend Sydney University, where she studied under the remarkable Professor of Philosophy John Anderson and graduated B.A. with First Class Honours in

English and Philosophy in 1936. She then was accepted into Somerville College at Oxford where she gained an M.A. with Second Class Honours, studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics ('Modern Greats') under (later Dame) Lucy Sutherland.

On her return to Australia she became a secondary school teacher in the NSW teaching service and the a lecturer in Education at Armidale Teachers' College. Like her father, she found teaching a vocation and like him she was much loved and respected by many of her students.

Her lecturing career at Armidale lasted thirty-eight years, including fourteen years after her official retirement when she was allowed to stay on as an 'honorary consultant' until the faculty of education removed from the building consequent on amalgamation with the University. Since that time she has continued to the present day, to teach philosophy for children at home. She wrote and published five books on education and was honoured with an Order of Australia in 1989 for her services to education.

Margaret was proud of and interested in her Scottish heritage and visited Scotland twice as an adult, once with John as an undergraduate to walk in the Trossachs and visit relatives and again in 1967 when she visited both 'Aunt Jim' in Huntly and the Duncan relatives in Keith. In particular, she was attracted by the long democratic tradition of learning in which 'every shepherd's hut contained a Greek grammar and a Bible' (MDM, 1995, pers. comm., 23/4). In this tradition it was equally possible for the laird's son and the hill shepherd to gain a place at the University. A part of her commitment to State education is derived from this heritage

Her brother John attended Knox Grammar School and was accelerated through school so rapidly that he repeated the Leaving Certificate examination three times and was still just one year behind Margaret when he entered Sydney University. He gained Honours there and won a place at Oriole College, Oxford, from which he gained a First Class Honours degree in Literae Humaniores ('Greats') in 1940. He enlisted in the British Army in 1941, served in Egypt and Italy for the duration of the European war and was mentioned in dispatches.

On his return to Australia in 1945 he was appointed to John Anderson's staff in Sydney as the Lecturer in Moral Philosophy. He married Joan Meredith in 1946. At the same time as his sister joined the staff at Armidale, John gained a Senior Lectureship and soon after, a Chair of Philosophy at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Alexander Mackie died in 1955, a disappointed man. Many of the reforms for which he had fought had been disbanded under Smith's directorship and had not been reinstated by his successors. His depression was also attributable to his medical condition, the aftermath of a stroke.

When John Anderson retired in 1959 John Mackie was appointed Challis Professor of Philosophy in his place then, closing a circle that was started by his father's and grandfather's emigration, returned to England in 1963 to take up a new Chair of philosophy at the University of York.

At the time Margaret Mackie's most successful book *Educative Teaching* was published in 1967, John was appointed as a Fellow and Praelector of University College at Oxford. By 1978, the year of Margaret's official retirement, John had reached the pinnacle of his success as a Fellow of the British Academy in 1974. Annie B. Mackie died in 1975. By this time a strain in the relationship between brother and sister which had been widening since his marriage, became apparent when John's visit to Australia for the funeral lasted only five days. Margaret was no longer invited to stay on her visits to England and was asked not to contact the children.

John Mackie wrote seven books, two of which were published posthumously under the editorship of his wife, Joan, and his eldest daughter Penelope. Of John's five children, four became academics. His daughter Nicola suicided in 1987. Hilary Mackie, the youngest daughter, a classicist, in 1994 re-established and has maintained contact by correspondence with Margaret Mackie after a hiatus of twenty-five years. John Mackie died in 1981.

It is not surprising that in the absence of close family ties, Margaret Mackie's almost total identification with her profession should become her *raison d'être*. Important elements in her self-concept were supplied by her Scottish heritage: in her valuing of learning both as an end in itself and as a vehicle of opportunity for the underprivileged, she could be said to be a fragment of the Scottish diaspora set down in an Australian country town.