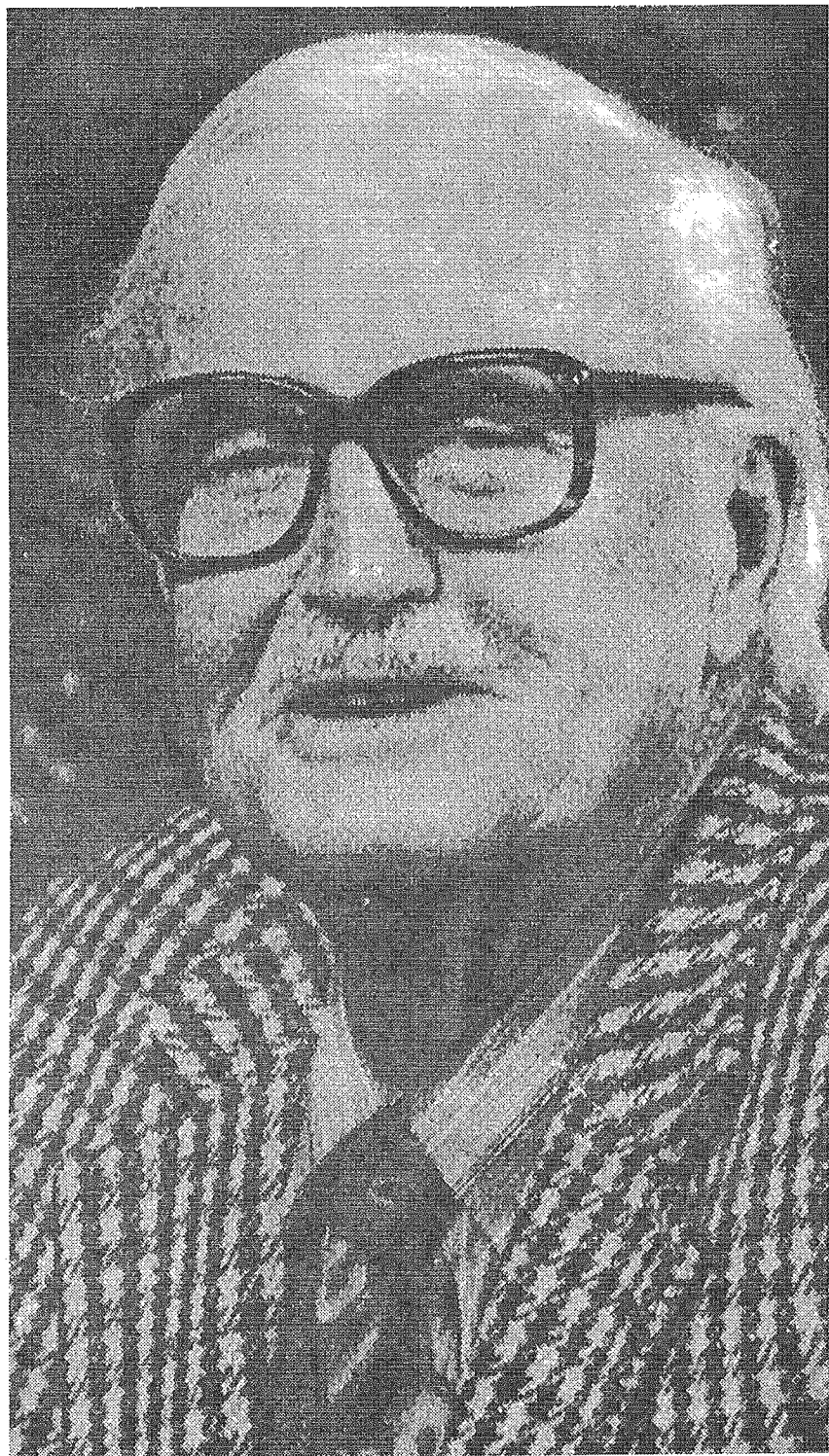


RUSSEL WARD

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A CELEBRATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW  
ENGLAND UNION - 1996



### Editor's Note

This short publication contains the edited proceedings of the memorial gathering for Professor Russel Ward held in the Arts Theatre, University of New England, on Friday, 18 August 1995, at 11.30 a.m., and attended by his family and some 300 friends and colleagues. I have added several other things: A photograph of Russel Ward; Professor Julian Croft's ode written for Russel Ward's eightieth birthday; the obituary I wrote for *The Australian*; extracts from some other obituaries and from letters received by the History Department at the time; and a select list of Russel Ward's publications.

The original tapes from which I worked, the verbatim transcripts, and the full file of material, are deposited with the Russel Ward Papers in the University of New England Archives.

I am most grateful to the Ward family, Jeané Upjohn, Jenny Bridge, Barry McDonald and Sally Macfarlane for their help.

August 1996

C.B.  
Armidale, N.S.W

# CONTENTS

<i>Editor's Note</i>	iii
<i>Proceedings of the Memorial Gathering for Russel Ward</i>	1
<i>Russel Ward, Eightieth Birthday Ode</i>	24
<i>Three obituaries and two letters</i>	25
<i>Russel Ward: Select Writings</i>	29

PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE MEMORIAL GATHERING  
FOR  
RUSSEL WARD

ARTS THEATRE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND  
18 AUGUST 1995

### The Wild Colonial Boy (Anon.)

It's of a Wild Colonial Boy, John Doolan was his name,  
Of poor but honest parents he was born in Castlemaine.  
He was his father's only hope, his mother's only joy,  
And so dearly did his parents love their Wild Colonial Boy.

He was only sixteen years of age when he left his native home,  
All through Australia's sunny clime bushranging for to roam.  
He robbed those wealthy squatters and their stock he did destroy,  
A terror to Australia was the Wild Colonial Boy.

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-five he started his wild career,  
With a heart that knew no danger, no foeman did he fear.  
He held up the Beechworth Royal Mail coach and robbed Judge McEvoy,  
Who trembled and gave up his gold to the Wild Colonial Boy.

He bade the judge good morning and told him to beware,  
He'd never rob a poor man or one who acted square.  
But a judge who'd rob a mother of her only pride and joy  
Well he was worse of an outlaw than the Wild Colonial Boy.

So it's gather 'round me hearties, we'll roam the mountains wide,  
Together we will plunder, together we will die,  
We'll wander through the valleys and we'll gallop o'er the plains,  
And we'll scorn to live in slavery bound down by iron chains.

As John rode out one morning, the mountainside along,  
a-listening to the little birds, their sweetly singing song,  
He spied three mounted troopers Kelly, Davis and Fitzroy,  
All riding out to capture him, the Wild Colonial Boy.

'Surrender now John Doolan, you can see we're three to one,  
Surrender in the Queen's name you daring highwayman'.  
John pulled his pistol from his belt and he waved that little toy,  
'I'll fight but not surrender cried the Wild Colonial Boy.'

He fired at Trooper Kelly and he brought him to the ground,  
But turning 'round to Davis he received his mortal wound,  
All shattered through the jaws he lay still firing at Fitzroy,  
And that's the way they captured him, the Wild Colonial Boy.

So it's gather 'round me hearties, we'll roam the mountains wide,  
Together we will plunder, together we will die,  
We'll wander through the valleys and we'll gallop o'er the plains,  
And we'll scorn to live in slavery bound down by iron chains.

It's of a Wild Colonial Boy, John Doolan was his name.

### Associate Professor Carl Bridge

I have been asked by the Ward family to chair this gathering in celebration of the life, achievements and friendships of Russel Ward. Barry McDonald sang a folk song for us as we entered, and he will be singing again at the end of the meeting. I see many people in the room who knew and loved Russel Ward and we will be hearing from some of you later on in the meeting as well. We are also here to honour and remember Russel Ward's contribution to the University of New England and to Australian letters.

Russel Ward set down guidelines or rules for this meeting and it has fallen to me to let you know these from the start. It's also up to me to make sure that you stick to them. John Ryan told me the other day that Winston Churchill did a similar thing for his funeral—he spent several years planning it and in his war-like way had a file called "Operation Hope Not". Russel's file wasn't quite "Operation Hope Not" but it was fairly detailed and he left copies of it with many people. One of the things that's happened over the last week or so is that we have been collecting versions of Russel's instructions, written and unwritten, and trying to come up with a version that we could live with. Some of the more interesting things that you can see about the room are actually part of the instructions: the Graeme Inson portrait of Russel, the wattle. I'll let you know what the main instructions are.

The first instruction was that the meeting be held at a secular place at the University of New England. Here we are gathered appropriately in the Arts Theatre. The second one was that we allow a few days for friends and colleagues to be notified in time so that they could forgather. We've done that using various forms of technology, e-mail, newspapers, telephones, and word of mouth. We've done pretty well, I think, looking around the room.

Russel also specified that as many of his colleagues at the university as wished wear formal academic dress. That may sound rather strange coming from someone with Russel's democratic socialist background. Not at all: Russel's view of academic dress was that it was the formal indicator of membership of the academic guild or, to put it another way, of Russel's trade union. That's what it's about. These are the signs of the community of scholars whose fellowship he cherished deeply and it's heartening to see them all about us.

Russel Ward was a humanist. He requested that there be no mention of religion at this meeting. So no mention of religion, please. It would offend Russel.

Russel wanted his friends to be invited to stand up and talk at this gathering and as many of you as possible will be given the opportunity to speak as time goes on. In order to fit people in—and we've only got an hour and a half, and there are various other things that we have to do—I would ask you not to speak for more than two or three minutes.

Russel was also keen to contribute to our conversation. So, in 1984 he recorded a message for us to listen to at this gathering. That message will be played as the penultimate part of our proceedings. After that there will be no more discussion. Then, again in accordance with Russel's wishes, "Waltzing Matilda" will be sung. Finally, you will be invited outside for refreshments, and Russel asked that some of the wine from his cellar should be opened to celebrate the occasion.

There is one other thing. The family has asked that any money in lieu of flowers be donated to a Russel Ward History Prize Fund. There is a box outside for donations. We haven't quite worked out the rules for the prize but we'll certainly take a leaf from Russel's book and make them precise.

Now for the order of the rest of the proceedings. First, I'll read out a list of those who have sent messages. Then, I'll invite the Vice-Chancellor to speak briefly on behalf of the university. He will be followed by our former Chancellor, by the Dean of Arts, and by the Head of History. After that, Russel's elder daughter, Biff Ward, will speak for the Ward family. I'll then invite the rest of you to contribute.

Many people wished to be here but for one reason or another couldn't come. Messages have come in from all over the country. I'll read out the list leaving out their titles, as some of these people are very eminent indeed and it would take up half the meeting to do otherwise: Sinnapah Arasaratnam, John Atchison, Ella Beer, Jenny Crew, Bill Driscoll, Terry Hogan, Alison Affleck, Ken and Elaine Moon, Peter Drake, Stephanie Lawson, Alan Powell, Jeff Warnock, Iain Spence, Kevin Walsh, Peter Elkin, Margaret Neale, Sandy Yarwood, Warwick Olphert, Tony McKittrick, Don Baker, K. and B. Buckley, Netta Burns, Noeline and Bob Chapman, Dymphna, Sebastian and Axel Clark, Ann Curthoys, John Docker, Norah and Colin Forster, Eric Fry, June Gibson, Anne and Bob Gollan, Glen and Liz Hamilton, Peter Hamilton, Sally Henderson, Amirah and Ken Inglis, Geoff Serle, Don Aitkin, Peter Carmel, Bruce Kent, Isabel McBryde, Humphrey McQueen, John Meredith, John Molony, Ann Moyal, John Mulvaney, John Merritt, Gary Shearston, Alex and Annette Hood, Marjory and Margaret Knight, Jim Staples, Ann Turner, Edgar Waters, Pat White and Bid Williams.

Before calling upon our Vice-Chancellor to speak, I'll just read two paragraphs from Russel Ward's most famous book, *The Australian Legend*, which say a great deal about Russel's eloquence and much else about Russel the man.

National character is not, as was once held, something inherited. Nor is it, on the other hand, entirely a figment of the imagination of poets, publicists and other feckless dreamers. It is rather a people's idea of itself and this stereotype, though often absurdly romanticised and exaggerated, is always connected with reality in two ways. It springs largely from a people's past experiences, and it often modifies current events by colouring men's ideas of how they ought 'typically' to behave.

According to the myth the typical Australian is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing 'to have a go' at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough'. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is 'the world's best confidence man', he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he's a great 'knocker' of eminent people unless, as in the case of his sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority especially when these qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable and above all will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he thinks they may be in the wrong. No epithet in his vocabulary is more completely damning than 'scab', unless it be 'pimp' used in its peculiarly Australasian slang meaning of 'informer'. He tends to be a rolling stone, highly suspect if he should chance to gather much moss.

### **Professor Bruce Thom, the Vice-Chancellor**

As Vice-Chancellor of this great university I wish to offer the Ward family the sympathy of all in the University of New England community on this sad occasion, for Professor Russel Ward was the UNE's most famous son and, as an Australian historian and author of *The Australian Legend*, a giant in the land.

*The Australian Legend* had for me a great personal impact when I was a student of history at the University of Sydney in the late '50s. It brought to me a view, a vision, of Australia which the histories then available did not possess. I think that he opened my mind, and the minds of thousands of other students, to a vision of this land that we are now very, very proud to possess.

Russel Ward came to this university in somewhat controversial circumstances, as I understand. This university gave him a home and he was delighted that this university, the University of New England, a rural-based university in Country Party territory would offer him a home, albeit in the first instance for twelve months on probation. But that probation was soon won and he became our most eminent professor.

Russel Ward was for twenty years a member of the History Department and professor for twelve years. He took a great interest in a wide variety of the university's affairs, in the University Union, in Wright College, and in university governance at all levels, ending his career as Deputy Chancellor. Others knew him much better than I and will speak of him in these various roles but on behalf of the university I simply wish to salute and farewell him.

### **Dr Rob Robertson-Cunninghame, former Chancellor**

We celebrate the life of Russel Braddock Ward and since I served on the council of the university with Russel for so many years I think it is appropriate that I should speak mainly about that period of his life.

It was during that time that I developed so much respect for Russel and, though there were topics on which we disagreed, we were able always to engage in discussion without animosity. While we could agree to differ, I was aware that his motives were entirely honourable and that he had the utmost regard for the interests of the university.

It was just after the war that I first heard about Russel. One of my ex-service friends in college spoke about someone with whom he shared a tent in the army.

This man had harangued the entire company on the merits of communism. As this person was so non-violent in nature the other soldiers were quite amused when he told them—and he did this on several occasions—that “Come the revolution, your blood will flow in the gutters”. Perhaps it is fortunate that it was not until after I joined Russel on the council that I found out that he was the person who had been making those statements. Of course by that time—and I am talking about the 1970s now—Russel's political views had matured to the extent that it was Russel who led the debate condemning the then communist Soviet Union for lack of academic freedom and a resolution to that effect was passed by council.

I recall that on the very first council meeting that I attended Russel had proposed that there should be student representation on the council. As that had my whole-hearted approval, it is probable that the very first submission that I made to the council was in support of Russel's proposal. Though the council adopted the concept, the university act of parliament had to be changed before there could be a student member. While there were many other times when I could support Russel's views about the rights of students, I was never able to convince him that students should have an input into the formulation of their curriculum.

Russel, having been the president of the union for two years and patron for a further two years, was always ready to argue the case for the union on the council. He was also energetic in ensuring the affairs of that organisation were properly managed. He would speak out without hesitation if he believed that the interests of the students and other members were not properly considered.

Of course, speaking out was a hallmark of Professor Russel Ward and he was rightly proud of that attribute. As is appropriate for any member of the university community, Russel was prepared to engage in scholarly argument on the council, its sub-committees and other bodies. His arguments were convincing to the extent that many of the motions that he put forward were successful. In particular, he influenced the policy on academic promotion so that greater recognition could be given to teaching and to community involvement. He was a staunch supporter of the concept of freedom of expression and that no one should be penalised for putting forward their views. I recall how I entered into some lengthy written debate on this matter shortly before I took on the office of Chancellor. Russel wanted to be certain that I too held the belief that freedom of expression was of paramount importance. I hastened with my affirmative reply but he again wrote to me, in particular about the academic community. In response, I said yes, I encouraged members of the university to speak out on any matter of concern. But it didn't quite satisfy. Finally, I found out that the sticking point was that, though we agreed on virtually all issues, I stood by my belief that, when speaking, individuals should not use the university to promote their own self interest.



In 1981, after I became Chancellor, Russel was elected Deputy Chancellor, an office that he held until the council was replaced by the Interim Board of Governors of the network university. During the whole of that time Russel was a most loyal supporter. At times I think that holding that office was somewhat of a mixed blessing for him. Though it gave him prestige and authority it did limit his opportunity to speak out against the decisions of the council. That was particularly significant when it came to the time when, with a good deal of reluctance, in 1989 the council bowed to the wishes of both state and federal ministers on the matter of amalgamation. However, he was able to continue to stand for academic integrity and for the independence of universities. Though, because of declining health during the period of the amalgamated university, Russel was a less effective advocate, he served the university until the amalgamation was dismantled at the end of 1993. From 1960 right through to 1993, apart from a few periods when he was on study leave, Russel Braddock Ward served the university as a member of its council and that is a most noteworthy contribution.

#### **Professor Graham Maddox, Dean of the Faculty of Arts**

I'll let you know what we in the Faculty of Arts think of Russel Ward. I would like to read to you from the citation for the degree of Doctor of Letters which was conferred on him by the university in 1983.

"Professor Ward presented to the Faculty of Arts for examination an extensive list of publications which represents a lifetime of groundbreaking scholarship on Australian history and literature. It included books ranging from the latest edition of his seminal work, *The Australian Legend*, to his widely used textbook, *A Nation for a Continent*; from his collection of Australian ballads to his translations of important early works on Australia originally written in French; from his selections of documents in Australian social history to his overview of British history. Together these books ensure Russel Ward's place in Australia as a thinker of innovation and vision, a scholar of dedication, a man of letters and culture, a keen communicator to the common person and an inspiring teacher of the youthful.

"In addition to the fifteen books he has written or edited (either singly or with colleagues) he has made distinguished contributions usually as 'keynote' author to ten books edited by others. His numerous journal articles reveal Professor Ward engaging in scholarly debates on many aspects of Australian life and culture.

"According to one of Professor Ward's examiners, himself a distinguished Australian historian, the list of publications '... represents a remarkable, I think unique, contribution to the writing and teaching and popularising of history and the consideration of Australian values. The range is awesome.'

"Of *The Australian Legend* he went on to say, '... I remember vividly the sense of exhilaration the book induced among scholars and pupils illuminating as it did so much in our society and giving us so much to argue about. For the next twenty years Professor Ward contributed robustly and cogently to the debates he had set going, and in *Historical Studies* for October 1978—an issue honouring him as no other Australian historian had quite been honoured—he delivered a spanking re-statement of his theme, while elsewhere in the issue younger scholars reported on the new prospects of our past they were able to get by standing on his shoulders.'

"A second examiner wrote, '... the highest tribute I can render to Professor Ward is that to me he has never been dull. In all he writes he has something to say. He says it with enthusiasm, vigour and indomitable courage. I will long recall my pleasure of reading his defence of his work in *Historical Studies* on the commemoration of *The Australian Legend*. I said then and I repeat it here that he stuck to his guns which roared the defiance of a scholar of both great learning and great integrity.'

"This degree is conferred for the examination of his written work, but it would be remiss of us not to acknowledge Professor Ward's contribution to the life of this University. He was appointed Professor of History in 1967 and in 1980 he was invited to accept the title Professor Emeritus. In his long association with them he has been a source of inspiration and encouragement to his colleagues and a constant stimulus to the attainment of highest standards in teaching and research. In the wider University he has always been a fearless champion of the pursuit of truth. Professor Ward continues his deep interest in and concern for this University by his active work both on the Council and on the Academic Advisory Committee."

Professor Ward continued to be a scholar almost to the end of his life. He was quite prepared to take on new ideas and to revise understandings which he had made many years before. He was indeed a model for all of us. The Faculty of Arts will miss him as a passionate and warm friend and as someone supremely loyal to the university and to the ideals which it upholds. We pass on our condolences to the members of the family and to all Professor Ward's friends and colleagues and he will be honoured as long as this university exists.

### **Associate Professor Geoff Quaife, Head of the History Department**

I direct my tribute to Russel as Head of the Department of History. The attitudes, or culture I think is the word we are supposed to use now, of the department were largely determined by Russel from the late '60s and through the '70s.

A lasting impact of Russel's drive was the change of direction in the concentration of our teaching, from European to Australian history, a change which reflected his intense nationalism. Russel's point, I remember, was made very simply. To him it was a scandal that Australian students at university level were not confronted with their own history. In the late '60s, when he became head, Australian history was found only in one part of one unit. I think he'd be pleased to know that next year there are thirty units conducted in our department in Australian history.

Concern for students was the key attitude that Russel instilled in us all by his own example. There must be hundreds of former students out there, and some here today, who, when faced with personal and financial difficulties, were found a bed, given a meal and given compassionate counsel by Russel. A number of former students have rung me this week and their message has been very simple, their emphasis was on Russel's compassion. Another aspect of Russel's concern for students was that they were never to be short changed. Under his headship, no classes were ever cancelled in History. If colleagues were ill, others, and often Russel himself, would step in to take over. That tradition is still operating in the department.

As part of this service to students, Russel expected all members of staff to be in their offices from 9 to 5 to provide ready access for students. They had plenty of time to do their research at night or on holidays. Students had to come first. This concern for students was also expressed in his dedication to external students. In a period when the credibility of studying externally had yet to be established, he was determined to ensure that students studying externally received the same lectures and the same tutorials as internals. Russel was a key player in the success of the New England model and his dedication lives on in the department today in our determination to defend that model to the end. The only thing missing is that Russel will not be on the barricades with us.

One can also emphasise Russel as an academic egalitarian. What impressed me most was his insistence that the professor should have the same teaching load as the most junior tutor and the expertise of the department should be directed to teaching in the first year. Those attitudes firmly shaped this department's approach both to teaching and to the teaching load.

But far more important than all of this was Russel's style of leadership. Russel was undoubtedly an autocrat. (I was going to take that out but I decided to leave it in.) But his view of autocracy was in the context of his sense of department, the department as an extended family in which we would all stand together to defend the common interest and to advance the common good. Deans would have found great difficulty, if Russel was still with us, in taking away our rooms, and committees of the university wouldn't have dared not to fill positions in History. This sense of department was manifest in the wider university community in his encouragement for all of us to take up responsibilities in the faculty, the Academic Board, colleges and university council. Russel had this inner view, an inner wisdom, that only historians were born to rule.

Russel also, of course, had a well developed sense of justice, of fair play, which was revealed in the appointments he made to the department. Although on the radical left himself, he was determined to create a department that had a balance of political views, of religious and non-religious appointments. In regard to the former, having appointed a Catholic nun his next appointment was an Anglican archdeacon. And it should be noted that under Russel's headship one third of the staff of over twenty were women, a proportion which twenty years later the university has not reached.

Above all, as a leader, Russel had a great sense of loyalty to the department as an entity and to every member of it. Russel was blunt and direct to us all in private but in the wider world he supported us a hundred per cent. Aggressive leadership, a sense of community bonded by mutual respect and loyalty were the keynotes of his headship. Perhaps I can sum this up in the words of G.K. Chesterton, "There is a great man, who makes every man feel small. But the really great man is the man who makes every man feel great". Such a man was Russel Braddock Ward.

### **Biff Ward, Russel Ward's elder daughter**

I have my brother Charlie as my supporter. It has been wonderful hearing these kind and thoughtful and I think very, very appropriate words about Dad. I'm speaking for our family, especially for his children. That is for me, my brothers Mark, Charlie and Oliver, and my sister Sally, and for his grandchildren—Genna, Brendan, Rohan, Ben and Hanna. We're a bit of a gang. We hang out quite a bit together, together across two generations and with various appendages as well.

Last time we were all together was last December when we came to Armidale to celebrate Dad's eightieth birthday. Some of us spoke then, at a party that some

of you may have been at, about how honoured we all feel to be related to him. He was a wonderful father. He was, as has been said, a great humanist and he was an incredibly loving human being. He was not perfect, as has also been indicated. He had some periods of enmity, as some of you will know. And in a family, as everybody knows, you experience failings and rough spots like nowhere else. We can all discuss some of his negative traits very articulately. But overall, for all of us, his children and grandchildren, we feel simply delight and pride and gratitude in being related to him and having been deeply influenced by him. One of the reasons for this is that he always had great respect for young people and would really listen and value what you said. I know some people who were his students who appreciated his qualities and they say it changed their lives. But we were especially lucky because we got that attention throughout our childhood.

There is an Eastern saying apparently, I don't know from which group particularly, that says that as you get near death your true nature shows. Well, Dad has been dying or threatening to die for a good five years. So we got to see a fair bit of his true nature. It was as though in these last few years all his hard edges, or what hard edges there were, fell away. He became all heart and, though he was always a great talker, his words flowed as never before. I say "heart", because in these last few years he cried very easily, he talked a great deal about love and he talked often, every day, of the way in which he noticed in the press and from what people told him, that human beings were treating each other better around the world all the time and then he'd cry a bit. And I say "words", as in this last period that facility he always had to toss out a pithy phrase seemed to reach new heights. Sometimes, when we were gathered round his chair or around various hospital beds, we would actually keep notes of some of the extraordinary things that flowed from his amazing brain, vivid phrases would just come out in his speech. My all time favourite, however, is one from many years ago when we lived in Canberra. It was when he described someone, I have no idea who, as being "prone to weaving gossamer threads of fine bullshit".

Last December, when we were gathered here in Armidale for that party, on the last night of that weekend it was just the family in Beardy Street and we were singing him some ballads. And when we sang "The Wild Colonial Boy" he got very excited about an item he had just seen in the paper a few days before that suggested that the Jack Donahoe, who died defending the island of Ambon against the Japanese in World War II, in order to give others a chance to escape, might indeed have been a direct descendant of the Jack Donahoe who was the original wild colonial boy. He could see that this story could be turned into a fabulous piece of history. He looked around the family, but none of us have turned into historians and he decided he'd like Tim, my daughter's partner, to do it as he could no longer go to his desk and do it himself, no longer be an historian

in that way, turning it into the written word. So he tried to explain to us what needed to be done in his very slowed-down and halting speech and, I want to tell you, that he was absolutely incandescent. He was completely lit up with a vision of how this story and these connections could be turned into a piece of history to illuminate the meaning of being human and his version of the Australian tradition and I realised that we were seeing the historian at work. It was as though he was naked in that role and what we saw, someone mentioned, was passion, creativity and excitement. I had never before seen so clearly how much he loved his work. He was an historian in every cell of his body.

There is a postscript to this story. Driving back to Canberra the next day, some of us went over the story to get it clear in our minds. Tim, it might have been Tim, who said we should try and do this thing. It was for us to do. But when we repeated the story it actually looked a bit jingoistic, drenched in violent heroism, even a touch crass. It needed his genius to bring it alive, as he had done the night before, to make it sing and speak to the heart of humanism.

And that touches on his great legacy to us—his values, his politics. In the last few years we, his children and his growing grandchildren, have shared activities like going to protest camps at American military bases. We've attended twice, as the Ward affinity group. And while the form that we each shape to convey these values may vary according to what we are doing in our lives, all of us share Dad's assumption that it's right and useful to act alone or in concert with others against bastardry—I had to put that in; Can't you just hear him?—and to make the world a better place.

I want, finally, to acknowledge the range and complexity of Dad's family life. He had two families of children. His first wife—Mark's and my mother, who turns eighty this weekend—sent flowers to his memory. His second wife, Barb, the mother of Charlie, Ov and Sal is here, as are they. It means that they're quite young to be losing their father. His sisters Jean and Claire are here. And I want to acknowledge his beloved companion of the last ten years, Jeané. Anyone who has seen them together may have noticed that they were like fourteen year olds with a crush. There is no doubt that they made each other incredibly happy. Dad's passing will signify a deep loss in Jeané's daily life. We are pleased to be able to share this sad time with her. She is a woman of great tenderness and generosity.

Dad lived a good and long and full life and we want everyone to celebrate that. We shall miss him incredibly simply because it was a treasure being with him. He was a presence like no other human alive. We thank you for coming today to join us in remembering him and in saying goodbye to him.

### Carl Bridge

We now have twenty minutes or so. I would ask you to respect the rules of the meeting as I spelt them out earlier. They're fairly simple. Don't speak for too long and don't mention religion. The floor's open. Please identify yourselves.

### Dr Pat O'Neil

My name is Pat O'Neil and after hearing this, which I found very, very moving, the words came into my mind, "You can say that again", because what I have to say overlaps very much with what Biff said. Russel helped me ten years ago through a very difficult time of my life and it's about the ten years since, and during which I have had the privilege to become a close mate of his, that I wish to tell you.

I want to reassure those of you here who are unaware of it, that there is life after retirement. Nobody epitomised that better than my mate, Russel. He lost none of his mental agility. He claimed he had lost much of the fire in his belly, although it still showed at times when people talked about things like political correctness. He was a joy to be with during these years. He claimed that they were the happiest of his life and those who knew him saw clearly that this was so, and that the cause of this was Jeané. Nobody denies the importance of the earlier legendary decades, but in these years of progressive calmness and benevolence, he always had a wisdom, a growing peaceful wisdom. Particularly recently—and there was a sort of countdown in recent years—I suppose we were aware that, while his mind remained so alert and clear and I for one learned so much from him, his body was frail and crumbling. At the birthday celebration that Biff talked about, nearly a year ago now, for his eightieth, and since that time, it was almost as though he was starting to let himself go. Progressively he declined into cardio-respiratory failure and he was teetering on the edge of coping but still having a lovely time. He couldn't do much at all. When the recent wog caught up with him and put him in hospital it was clear to him and to those of us around that he'd passed the point of no return.

Socrates said two and a half thousand years ago, in relation to euthanasia I suppose, "Thou shalt not kill and shouldst not strive officiously to keep alive". Russel lectured me on the quotation and gave me the source of it. We talked of many things including the fact that when the time did come to move on the greatest thing that one can do is to go knowing that you are leaving the world a better place for having been here. I think all of us can say this of Russel Ward. His greatest accolade was to say somebody, "He was a great and good man". I think all of us could say of Russel, "He was a great and good man".

### Mr Simon Bracegirdle

I come from Brisbane. I left at five o'clock this morning and didn't bring a pencil and paper with me so I haven't been able to make notes. I first knew Russel Ward in 1940 when we were members of the Communist Party in Sydney. My connections with him in the ensuing few years were fairly remote. In the last ten years we had a renewed and very close friendship and it was my great pleasure and I might say honour to spend several hours with him the weekend before last just before he died in the Texas hospital. His clarity of thought, even in those last dying stages, amazed me. I had been doing a little bit of writing and needed a little knowledge on various points of history and oh what clarity and accuracy of information he was able to give me, despite his enormous difficulty in speaking. There have been some close connections between our families. My family lived in Armidale and my daughter has been to various war-like establishments and shaken her fists and been arrested. I think you may have been too. I'm very proud of the connection I and my family have with the Ward family and I'd like to say how lucky Russel was to have for the last ten years a wonderful woman like Jeané to whom I am very much attached and whom I greatly admire.

### Emeritus Professor Neil Yeates

I came to this university the same year as Russel did, 1957. You all know, as I do, that Russel believed in the egalitarianism of the Australian people, but I'd like to just mention one thing that showed Russel was a great believer in it himself and practised it.

Here he was, a dyed-in-the-wool operator within the Faculty of Arts, and I was only in Rural Science, and yet Russel hobnobbed with us. I recall that we used to have schools out in the country, organised by none other than Arch Nelson, who was head of the Department of Adult Education and who is here today. We went out one night—it would have been somewhere like Moree—and in his good sense Arch used to organise that not only the graziers would be catered for with stuff about beef cattle and wool and so on, but there'd be a class for the ladies. These were held on subjects like history, child welfare, all that sort of thing. Russel came out on one of these occasions and I was the driver of the university car bringing him back to Armidale. We came to a petrol station, just about half a mile west of Inverell, on the outskirts, and I was looking at the petrol gauge. I said, "I think we'll get some petrol for this car", and Russel said, "Neil, I think we ought to have a glass of red." I think that was his favourite drink. I was interested to hear that he even has had brought some up from the cellar today.

I always thought of Russel as a good comrade here at the university over many, many years and we kept in reasonable touch since then.

### **Dr Ken Macnab, University of Sydney**

Russel taught me Australian history and supervised my Australian history thesis. I think he had, apart from enormous knowledge, that which is absolutely essential to be a great teacher, and that is enthusiasm for what he taught. In fact, he combined his scholarship and his lifestyle. I remember being invited to his home in Beardy Street. We got out and played some of the collection of tapes of folk songs he had used for his PhD thesis at ANU. Then he got out a flagon of red. I even know the brand name. It was Fiorellis. He used to drive down the hill to get cheap plonk. He'd fill the boot with the stuff and come back. That's when I got into the habit of going to the Hunter myself and getting some too.

I was very pleased with the quotes from *The Australian Legend*. I think they were most appropriate. I think above all what he put into that book was this purely Australian concept of mateship and that's something which you can apply in almost any area of life. As far as universities are concerned it's the concept of collegiality, something not always understood by the new managers in universities. When it comes to the working life, it's trade unions. By and large Russel was always on the side of the largest group of people, the workers. I was very pleased to have been associated with Russel Ward and his family. It's something of which I'll always be extremely proud.

### **Mrs Jean Yule**

My name's Jean Yule. I'm Russel's Presbyterian sister. And I'd like to just briefly take you back to Russel's childhood because he was three years older than me and so he was always there for our sister Claire and for me. Just before I left Anglesea on Monday morning the last person who phoned me was Chandos Hoskyns who had started school with Russel in 1922 when we went from Charters Towers to Wesley College south of Perth and so Chan was Russel's oldest friend.

The other thing I just want to say briefly is that at Adelaide University in the '30s both Russel and I were involved in the anti-Fascist type movement of the peace groups as a reaction to the invasions of Manchuria by the Japanese and the Italians going into Abyssinia. Russel went off into politics and the Communist Party and I went off into the Australian Student Christian Movement and the church. And so we have had this lifelong relationship of love and respect. It is all true what Biff said about Russel and that it is the heart that matters.

### **Mr Arch Nelson**

There is a danger in asking old men to reminisce, but I'll try to be very brief. It is a great pleasure to hear Jean Yule again, because we were together at the University of Adelaide. To discipline myself, I will just say one thing. It is this. That the strength of this university's work in communities depended not so much on the organisers of that work, myself and my colleagues, who were all very able people, but on the great people who constituted the teaching staff of the university. You know, as I reflect on the past of this university, it strikes me very forcibly indeed that people who worked most successfully and most effectively in our communities were also our greatest scholars and our greatest teachers and foremost among them I would place Russel Ward.

### **Professor Isabel McBryde, Australian National University (message read by Associate Professor Don Beer)**

Yesterday I learnt of the sad news of Russel Ward's passing and write to send the History Department my sympathies at this time. Russel was one of the foundation members of the department, so his loss will be deeply felt. He was also such a fine person, as well as a seminal figure in Australian history.

Personally I have wonderful memories of his kindness to me when I was a young lecturer and we taught Ancient History together. He was also so supportive of my archaeological research, not only in being interested but in coming on the first excavation as cook (with Frank Wilcock as assistant cook). Their good food, and evening camp fire stories made it a memorable trip. We have kept in touch since and his going will create a sad gap in my circle of intellectual friends.

The gap will be even greater for his family and friends, and his close colleagues in the Department. My thoughts are with you all. It is a great disappointment that I cannot join with you all in honouring Russel's life and saying farewell.

### **Carl Bridge**

I'll now call upon Associate Professor Alan Atkinson to read a message from Alex Hood, the folk singer, and his wife Annette. They are, I think, at this moment in Blackall, where Alex is singing "Waltzing Matilda", but they'd like to be here.



**Alex and Annette Hood** (message read by Associate Professor Alan Atkinson)

Well, Russel, old mate, we are sorry we can't be there to see you off.

At this moment we are doing our show for twenty-five kids at Yaraka, west of Blackall, spreading the story, the Australian Legend. I always come back to your books, Russ. You saw things in such a clear light, too clear for some people.

We both love you heaps, Annette and I, and have really enjoyed our meetings over the last few years. You became part of our total experience.

Our last memory of you will stay with us always, our review of "Waltzing Matilda", its myths and realities, sick as you were, just a few days ago. The fire rose in your eyes once more, and you left me with some work to follow up.

One thing I can tell everyone, in case they didn't know. The philosophy which drove you all your life never diminished for a moment—your hatred of injustice and belief in the cause of human liberation burnt fiercely to the end.

It's remarkable that with all the hooha about the swagman this year I've yet to hear the real point (which we talked of)—the value of a human being in relation to a sheep (what better sentiment for a national song!).

Goodbye, from us both, old mate,

Alex and Annette

### **Carl Bridge**

There's time for two or three more brief contributions before we hear Russel's own contribution.

### **Dr Keith Amos, University of Technology Sydney**

I just wanted to add a very brief comment. I became associated with Russel as a LittB student in 1973 and continued on under his supervision until the middle 1980s. I think I may have been his last PhD student. In the very early years he quickly identified me as being politically sound when I attacked Menzies for being British to the boot-heels and thereafter Russel was a very dear and close

mate and we were always like that. If there were difficulties in my trying to do a PhD as an external student, he could always overcome them. If there was some rule that said that I had to be up here for so many months, he'd say: "Come on, Keith, if there's an act of bastardry, you just subvert it." He'd find some way of getting around it. He took us completely into the fold of his family as we did him. When you got to know Russel on one level, whether it was as historian, or as teacher, or as personal friend, you knew him on all levels. He was a very, very great man and dear friend of ours.

### **Dr Bruce Mitchell**

I was in the History Department in the '70s with Russel. I just want to add a footnote. I'm driven to stand up because Neil Yeates is here and I feel Russel looking me in the eye, and saying, "Bruce, you have to say something if bloody Neil Yeates is talking." One of Russel's great phrases, of course, was to refer to everyone "over the hill". As, if you know this campus, "over the hill" is where scientists generally are. His best collective phrase for them was "the animal husbands". And, that usually had a preparatory phrase; it all just came out as one phrase, "the swivel-eyed animal husbands". Looking at him, I remembered that Neil Yeates was one of those.

The phrases of Russel, we all know them, we all have our favourites. There were some that he used all the time. He would greet us in the tea room with "fellow slaves". He had a very strong sense of egalitarianism. There was a class division in the world: there were those who were the owners and the bosses and the rulers, and there were us, the "slaves". "Blind Freddy" was always invoked to rebuke any student or colleague who couldn't see something terribly obvious, as even "Blind Freddy" could see it. Most of Russel's images were from the nineteenth-century Australian lexicon. We're not supposed to mention religion, but "God-botherers" and "sky pilots" were regularly being denounced in the tea room. Another Russelism, which showed the sure touch of an Australian historian, was his nickname for the floods of external essays in lemon-coloured folders which engulf the staff periodically. He called them "Yellow Perils". And the name has stuck.

He—it's already been mentioned, but I want to emphasise it—was a professor who believed that you led from the front. You taught first years and that's something that seems to have gone out of fashion in the modern university.

He shared with me, and a lot of others present, I think, a great disapproval of what has happened in the Australian university since the dreadful Dawkins was doing things in 1989. Russel told me that the very last speech he made at the council level, perhaps at the Board of Governors, was to denounce the decision of the university to pay the senior administrators more than professors. For a long while there'd been this nexus, but in these bad days that nexus was broken and Russel's last words to the council were in denouncing that.

I want to finish with a comment. Russel was a schoolteacher, or saw himself as a teacher. He believed in teacher training. He was not antagonistic to the teachers' college on the hill in those days, and was very much in favour of teacher education being brought into the History Department. But his comprehension of what teacher education was about, I thought, was a bit limited. The phrase that he always used whenever we were discussing teacher education was: "Yes, I'm in favour of that. You've got to teach the little buggers not to piss in the inkwells."

#### Carl Bridge

It's now appropriate to hear from the man himself.

#### Russel Ward (on tape)

Funerals are usually an occasion for glorifying a god who, I believe, just is not there. I want, for a change, to say something about the faith by which rationalists, humanists and agnostics live and die. First, nothing I say on this tape should be misunderstood as an attack on Christianity. Most of my best friends were Christians, I was brought up in the Faith and I have always believed that the record of Christ's life and teaching provides the best pattern there is for human beings to emulate. I also believe, however, that Christ was a human being too, the best that ever was, but with no supernatural or magical assistance.

Humanists do not believe in any kind of magic. There is no god, or devil or other supernatural force and of course there is no resurrection and no after-life. Everything in the cosmos, including the marvellous power of people to love each other, is susceptible to human reason. That we can never completely explain some things and not yet understand other things at all, does not imply or prove that magic exists: it merely shows that there is still an infinite amount of work to be done by the creative artistic and scientific imagination of human beings.

Yet there obviously is a kind of immortality. For at least as long as people speak English in this continent, the words, the values and ideas of Henry Lawson will continue to live in the minds of other men and women: and there is no human being who, after death, is not remembered in this way for a longer or shorter time by those who knew and loved him or her.

A century ago one of the greatest rationalists of his time, Ralph Ingersoll, said, "Do good, for good is good to do; not for hope of heaven or fear of hell". This points to the basic difference between believers and agnostics. It also suggests why logical people cannot believe in any of the descriptions of the Christian god.

All agree that God's leading qualities are love, wisdom and justice. To please God by loving our fellows, by living a good life, in order to be rewarded and to avoid punishment after death, is to be profoundly selfish and, incidentally, profoundly un-Christian; for Christians agree with all other human beings that the greatest sin is selfishness and the greatest good, altruism or love.

Some believe hell to be a hot place where people are tortured physically by beings more expert in this abominable art than those who practise it in most of the world's secret police forces. The great Christian poet, T.S. Eliot, believed it was a state which to him seemed even more appalling: to be forever acutely aware of separation, or exclusion from the presence, of God. All Christians agree that hell is a place, or state, where sinners are cruelly punished eternally.

Agnostics know that it is simply not there: for we cannot imagine any sane human-being so resolutely vicious as to continue torturing a fellow creature, no matter how weak or wicked he had been, for *ever* and *ever*. To hold that an all-loving and omniscient *god* does this seems ridiculous.

Christians believe we should help our fellows and not harm them because so to do pleases God greatly; but they also believe that God's *first* demand is belief in himself. Again, a normal human being, who wished his neighbours well, magically placed on God's throne, would be most interested in people's efforts to do good deeds but completely uninterested in whether they were believers or not, and bored out of his mind by the non-stop reassurances of his own existence and attributes emanating from a hundred thousand churches and a hundred million individuals every second. A *wise* god, if he existed, would obviously be even more bored by this non-stop adulation.

Humanists then do not believe in fairies. What do they believe in? If there are no rewards for good, and punishments for bad, behaviour, Christians are wont to ask, why should not unbelievers live thoroughly selfish lives, grabbing all they can for themselves and ignoring the needs of their fellows?

Humanists in fact seek good for their fellow-creatures because they love them for their own sakes. Humanists know that men are distinguished from other sensate species by their greater degree of self-consciousness, and with it the vastly greater capacity for good and for evil, which they possess. Humans differ from others, above all in being more social animals; that is to say, more cooperative, mutually helpful and loving.

It is an appalling fact that modern men are the only animals on this planet which make war or prey upon their own species. Humanists place greater emphasis on man's equally impressive capacity for love; for no other species has created such complex social arrangements within which individuals may express themselves so freely.

For humanists the opportunity to spend one's life working with one's fellows for the common good is infinitely precious. Many Christians feel the same way, but they must waste a good deal of time performing rituals and saying prayers to the glorification of imaginary beings who, it is believed, will relieve their devotees of at least some of the responsibility for their own actions. As the great poet, my friend, A.D. Hope, wrote to our mutual friend, the Catholic poet, James McAuley:

Men must either bear their guilt and weakness  
Or be a servile instrument to powers  
That darken knowledge and corrupt the heart.

Humanists perfectly understand those lines and try, imperfectly, to live up to them.

I do not necessarily want my surviving loved ones, my children and grandchildren, to cherish these beliefs; but I would like them to know that I lived by them.

### Carl Bridge

There are two remaining instructions. Barry McDonald, in his function as bard, is to lead us in singing "Waltzing Matilda"; and then we are to move outside. The sun is shining and Russel wanted us all to have a drink. Would you also on the way out, if you haven't done so already, please sign the attendance book.

### END OF PROCEEDINGS

### Waltzing Matilda By A.B. "Banjo" Paterson

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,  
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
'Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?'  
Waltzing Matilda,  
Waltzing Matilda,  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?'  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
'Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?'

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong:  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee.  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker-bag,  
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'  
Waltzing Matilda,  
Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker-bag,  
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'

Up rode a squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred;  
Down came the troopers, one, two, three:  
'Whose' that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!  
Waltzing Matilda,  
Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'  
Whose' that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!'

Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong;  
'You'll never catch me alive!' said he;  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!'  
Waltzing Matilda,  
Waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!'  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!'



## RUSSEL WARD, EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY ODE

Russel, it's more than daunting to rehearse  
all that you have done in eighty summers.  
It is beyond the scope of this short verse  
to catalogue the books, chairs, and honours.  
I'll leave it to your kids to write those sonnets,  
and celebrate instead the man, a hero of the past  
who comes back with his shield, not on it.  
But on that shield in wreathing forms is cast  
scenes of the hero's feats in love and war:  
the first, I'll leave to poets more skilled than me  
and concentrate instead on ancient lore  
of your perilous journey to this university.  
The dread atomic knight, Sir Philip B  
held all in sway in Kensington. He swore  
that all red knights were false and full of treason.  
King Ming, likewise, believed it too,  
it had the right and proper ring of reason.  
So they made sure there was no chair for you  
to fit at their eccentric table.  
New England beckoned, cold and true,  
far from their technological Babel.  
Here you have prospered, so have we,  
like farmers, finding profit in the bad,  
and you have kept faith in adversity  
when witless others just ran mad.  
Your books have shown us what our lives have meant,  
Your life, a book, full of what others merely tell:  
History records that atomic knight's half-life is spent:  
his name carved round in your shield's spell,  
with others that you have had the edge on.  
Yet above them all, shines Russel with one L—  
but it's a capital, and begins the Legend.

Julian Croft  
November 1995

## THREE OBITUARIES AND TWO LETTERS

Carl Bridge, "Author defined white man's dreaming", *The Australian*,  
6 September 1995

Russel Ward AM

Historian, author of *The Australian Legend*. Born Adelaide, November 9, 1914.  
Died Texas, Queensland, August 13, aged 80.

Early in August 1995 two old mates—an eminent historian and a folksinger—met at a hospital in the small town of Texas in southern Queensland. Though he did not know it, the historian Russel Ward, had only a few days to live. Ward talked haltingly of songs and life to his friend, Alex Hood. At one point Ward's eyes lit up: "Isn't it wonderful and uniquely Australian", he said, "that Australia's best-loved song, 'Waltzing Matilda', is about the value of a human being in relation to a sheep!"

No historian comes closer to defining the essentials of the elusive "national identity" of old Australia, the white man's dreaming, than Russel Ward in his classic, *The Australian Legend* (1958).

The 'typical Australian' is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing 'to have a go' at anything, but ... content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough' ... He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion ... He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but ... probably a good deal better ... [H]e is very hospitable and ... will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he thinks they may be in the wrong.

Despite the many social changes since it was first published, Ward's superbly written and provocative synthesis has been the nation's best-selling history book for nearly forty years. The new voices of women, Aborigines, the city and multiculturalism have yet to fully stifle its siren call.

Russel Braddock Ward was born in Adelaide. He grew up mostly in Perth, where his father, John Frederick Ward, was foundation headmaster of Wesley College, but he finished his schooling back in Adelaide, whence his father returned as head of Prince Alfred College.

Ward never attended a school of which his father was not head. The father, a scholarship boy, staunch Methodist, classicist and teetotaler, left an indelible impression on the son. "Faith is putting into your life the substance of what you believe", old J.F. preached. And Russel heeded him, though he did not necessarily believe in the same things.

At Adelaide University Russel was a brilliant English scholar, a debater, a student politician, and quite a blade. Defying his Methodist upbringing, he drank too much, drove his parents' car too fast, espoused fashionable leftist positions, played rugby, and rowed in the eight. Then he botched two of his final papers and missed out on the expected Rhodes scholarship to Oxford.

Disappointed, Ward taught at Geelong Grammar then Sydney Grammar. Over several years he spent his holidays in the bush, working as a miner, wheat lumper, road labourer and rouseabout. These experiences, his radical politics, his reading of Lawson and an increasing interest in Australian ballads later coalesced in the highly romanticised Australianness of the *Legend*.

In Sydney in 1941, and newly married, Ward joined the Communist Party and was active in productions at the New Theatre and in the teachers' union. At this time he abandoned Christianity and became, for the rest of his life, a humanist and agnostic. From mid-1942 to the war's end, he served in an army Psychological unit.

Itching to earn his living as a writer, he frequented the Journalists' Club, befriending among others Cyril Pearl and Kenneth Slessor. By now teaching in state schools, at night he composed captions for a Weet Bix card series on Wonders of the Pacific. Then, in the early '50s, he wrote a best-selling, and mildly marxist, junior high school textbook, *Man Makes History*. Other textbooks followed.

In 1953 Ward won a scholarship to the Australian National University, where he wrote the doctoral thesis which became *The Australian Legend*. Though he had left the party in 1949, Ward's Communist past led to his missing out on lectureships at Wagga Teachers' College and the University of Technology, where his case became a *cause célèbre* in 1956. But the University of New England at Armidale came to his rescue with a lectureship in History in 1957. There he remained, rising to the chair in 1967 and serving eight years as Deputy Chancellor. Besides the *Legend*, he wrote or edited 17 books, among them the celebrated twentieth century history, *A Nation for a Continent*, and his memoirs, *A Radical Life*.

Tall, barrel-chested, sandy-haired, blue-eyed and softly spoken, Ward sported a clipped moustache, dressed well and had a commanding presence. His character oscillated between gentleness and belligerency.

Always a mixture of the gentleman scholar, the Bohemian radical, and the larrikin, he shared his table and cellar generously with a wide circle of friends. His command of antique Australian slang was a feast for the ears. "Blind Freddy" was omnipresent, and enemies might be "beetle-browed, splay-footed, swivel-eyed bastards" or "barnacles on the backside of the ship of state". But he was also a great encourager, insisting, for instance, that all markers' comments on students' essays begin positively no matter how poor the work.

Ward's first marriage, to Margaret Ind, was dissolved in 1970. He then married Barbara Holloway, and for his last nine years his companion was Jeané Upjohn. These three women, five children, and two sisters survive him.

Russel Ward was buried to the strains of "The Wild Colonial Boy". His grave in the Armidale Cemetery is on a rise overlooking his beloved New England Ranges.

**Professor Don Aitkin, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra, in *Monitor: the newspaper of the University of Canberra*, 23 August 1995**

I first encountered Russel Ward in 1957, when he was appointed as a lecturer in History at the University of New England. We learned fairly quickly that there was a mystery about him. It was said that he had been refused another lecturing job on security grounds. He was (gasp!) supposed to be a communist.

He certainly didn't look the part. The cartoons of the 1950s tended to portray communists as ferrety little men with the Soviet flag tucked into their cap and a bomb tucked under their arm. Russel was a big man with a parade-ground voice, a rather flushed face, a military moustache, and the general air of a retired colonel.

The following year, 1958, I did honours in History, and he was in charge of the seminar on Australian history (the first time in my four undergraduate years that we were allowed to study the history of our own country). He was a superb small group tutor, who seemed to know everything about the underside of Australian history, and had an anecdote for everything.

On the development of social capital in New South Wales, for example, he told us of the mad scramble for the telegraph during the Premiership of Sir John Robertson. The shortage of the necessary telegraph wire (all then, of course, imported) made progress slow, and the exasperated Robertson exploded to one local leader, "You can't have the telegraph yet. There's no wire! What do you think I am, some kind of spider, spinning the stuff out of my arse?"

History had never been like this before. Russel's stories brought the 19th century to life, and he managed to integrate the social and political history for me. When I won a Commonwealth Postgraduate Scholarship at the end of the year I asked whether he would be my supervisor. He was happy to do so, and did it well.

When I began to move steadily from history into political science, towards the end of my time, Russel became nervous. After reading one long section, he said, in his straightforward way, "I can't tell whether or not this is any good. It's not history. You'd better go and see what the political scientists say."

We didn't have any of those at UNE, so that meant going to the University of Sydney. Russel helped to make the journey both possible and profitable. When their verdict on my work was favourable, he was as pleased as if the judgment had been his own.

I moved out of his domain into my own, but we kept in contact, reading each other's stuff and commenting on it. He had a good eye for relevance and for argument, and he loved life, his fellow creatures and the world, even when things were going against him. I learnt a lot from him and admired his heart and spirit.

#### **Dr Eric Fry in *The Age*, 21 September 1996**

Russel Ward, from a conservative background, became a radical historian, placing the ordinary people, at first the bushmen, at the heart of the story of white Australia ...

In his many writings on Australian history "temper democratic, bias Australian" set his tone as he both told and interpreted the story.

Seeing in Australia's history a conflict between the many and the few, between reform and reaction, Ward declared himself on the progressive side, writing with skill and conviction ...

#### **Professor Ann Curthoys, History Department, Australian National University**

The History Department would like to express ... to the family, friends, and former colleagues of Russel Ward, its sadness at his passing away, and our very great appreciation of his achievements and services to the study of Australian history. Those of us who knew him personally regarded him as a scholar of distinction, an innovative and independent historian, and as an exceptionally warm and generous person.

#### **Dr Geoff Serle, Melbourne**

We were very old mates ... I remember vividly those ANZAAS meetings in the '50s and '60s when we, Australianists especially, were still such a tiny brotherly band—convivial is the word ... I need not go on about his great qualities—integrity, principledness etc., etc. ... [H]e led a great life.

#### **RUSSEL WARD: SELECT WRITINGS**

*Phoenix: the Literary Annual of the Adelaide University Union* (H. Piper, M. McKellar Stewart and Russel Ward), Hassell, Adelaide, 1936.

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