

LETTERS FROM THE WEST 1975-1976

David Carment

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PREFACE

This is an edited collection of the letters I wrote to my parents while I worked in the Department of History at The University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth between February 1975 and December 1976.¹ It was my first full-time academic appointment. Although I was only in the job for less than two years, it and my residence in Currie Hall at the university significantly shaped my later life. The letters were usually hastily written, were far from comprehensive in describing my activities and now often seem clumsy and naïve. They provide, however, a young historian's impressions of Australian academic life, an immigrant's responses to Western Australia and a flavour of cultural, social and political developments during the mid 1970s.

I was born in Sydney in 1949 into a middle class family of mainly Scottish ancestry. I graduated as a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with Honours in History at The University of New South Wales (UNSW) in 1972 and as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History at The Australian National University (ANU) in 1975. My PhD thesis was on the Australian non-Labor federal politician Sir Littleton Groom (1867-1936). While at ANU I lived in University House. Towards the end of 1974 I was offered a three-year Tutor position in Australian history at The University of Sydney and 10 months as Temporary Senior Tutor in the same field at UWA. I accepted the latter position partly because it was at a higher level but mainly to live for a while in a part of Australia with which I was previously unfamiliar. It was an impulsive decision. I then knew little about Perth and Western Australia and had no guarantee of continuing employment beyond the end of the contract. I read as much as I could about Western Australia and UWA in the couple of months before I left Canberra.

My parents, the recipients and keepers of the letters, moved from Sydney to Burradoo, near Bowral in New South Wales's Southern Highlands, during 1973. They went back to Sydney in 1976. My father Maxwell Carment (1918-2007), formerly a chartered accountant, was on the boards of various Australian and overseas companies. My mother Diana Carment (1927-2005) studied Architecture at The

¹ My father filed the letters after they were received. They are now at my Sydney home.

University of Sydney but was not in paid work following her marriage. She was especially interested in art.

For the most part the letters are presented here as they were originally written with only occasional amendments to correct minor errors, remove unnecessary repetition and, when possible, include people's names where these are sometimes omitted. Most letters begin 'Dear Mum and Dad' and finish 'Lots of love, David'. I do not repeat those phrases here. Editorial additions and comments help explain matters covered in particular letters, provide a context for them and fill in gaps. Images are also included. Footnotes provide very brief biographical information, sometimes obtained by Internet searches, on people mentioned in the letters where this is not in the main text. Further background details are in Jenny Gregory's *City of Light: A History of Perth since the 1950s*,² her edited *Seeking Wisdom: A Centenary History of the University of Western Australia*³ and Margot Clifford's *Where We Live, Let Us Live: From University Hostel to Currie Hall, 1942-1999*.⁴

The letters indicate that while I was conservative in comparison with many other young Australian adults of the mid 1970s changing political and social attitudes still considerably influenced me. In addition to covering aspects of my work, the letters tell how I kept in touch with friends who lived in other parts of Australia and the world, made new friends in Perth, enjoyed an active social life, read widely, explored parts of Western Australia, and saw live performances, films and sporting contests. They reveal that, although separated by thousands of kilometres, I remained close to my parents. Even when we disagreed they remained loving and supportive.

Because my parents were neither academics nor historians the letters to them only partly show how UWA provided a wonderful apprenticeship for my subsequent career. The eminent historian Alan Atkinson observes that between the mid to late 1970s and the early 1980s UWA was 'the best university in Australia for historians'.⁵ I remain grateful to my mentors there, especially Marian Aveling (later Quartly),

² Perth, 2003.

³ Crawley, 2013.

⁴ Crawley, 2002.

⁵ 'History in the Academy', in Anna Clark & Paul Ashton (eds), *Australian History Now*, Sydney, 2013, p 112. My UWA colleague Pen Hetherington also writes positively about this period in her *Twentieth Century Woman*, Bassendean, 2007, pp 103-106.

Brian de Garis, the late Peter Reeves and the late Tom Stannage, from whom I learned important lessons about research, teaching and life.

This book was compiled as a retirement project for my own enjoyment. Having, however, encouraged others to make records of their past experiences publicly accessible I felt I should do the same. The book is published on my website <http://dcarment.com> and a small number of copies are being printed, mainly for libraries.

1975

My vehicle trip to Perth began in Canberra.

Commodore Motel, Mildura 18 February 1975

Yesterday I mainly spent in packing. I submitted my thesis and said goodbye to Manning Clark⁶ [my PhD supervisor]. My three thesis examiners are Dr Reese⁷ and Professors Crisp⁸ and Joyce.⁹ I will probably have my oral examination in either or May or June. Last night Gerhard [Brey]¹⁰ asked me to dinner and afterwards [Tran] My-Van¹¹ had myself and a few other friends around for drinks.

When I left this morning I had quite a send off committee – My-Van, Algy [Howe],¹² Gerhard and a few other friends. I departed at about 10.00 AM and got here at about 6.30 PM after a long and very hot drive. The motel is quite good. You might remember staying here in August 1967 when we went to South Australia.

Tomorrow I would like to reach Ceduna.

UWA 24 February 1975

It was good to be able to speak with you both when I made my phone call on Friday evening. I was pretty tired when I got to Perth and slept very well last night.

Since I last wrote from Mildura I have done a great deal. On the Wednesday I drove from Mildura to Ceduna in South Australia, a distance of about 1120 kilometres. This was the most interesting part of my journey so far. I passed through rich fruit growing areas of Victoria and South Australia and then went on to Port Augusta via Clare and Mount Remarkable – the latter being most spectacular. I stayed in a poor motel in Ceduna that was supposedly air conditioned but had air

⁶ Manning Clark was Professor of History.

⁷ Trevor Reese was Reader in History at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London.

⁸ Fin Crisp was Professor of Political Science at ANU.

⁹ Roger Joyce was Professor of History at La Trobe University.

¹⁰ Gerhard Brey was a PhD student in Earth Sciences at University House. He was later Professor of Mineralogy at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University.

¹¹ Tran My-Van was a PhD student in Asian Civilizations at University House. She was later Associate Professor in International and Asian Studies at University of South Australia.

¹² Algy Howe was Senior Lecturer in Mathematics at ANU and a University House resident.

conditioners that seemed totally ineffective so that night was pretty hot and sleepless. On the next day I went from Ceduna to Norseman – 1223 kilometres. The dirt road across the Nullarbor was particularly difficult. It was covered in mammoth puddles due to the pouring rain that added to the obstacles already posed by countless potholes. I was glad to reach the Western Australian border and the bitumen again. Another unexpected hazard on the Nullarbor was the price of petrol. In some places it was 87 cents a gallon. As the only motel in Norseman was full I camped the night in my tent. On the following morning I drove to Kalgoorlie via Kambalda and Boulder. Kalgoorlie is a bit like Broken Hill. It has quite clearly seen better days. Just outside Kalgoorlie I hit an emu or rather the emu hit me. I swerved to avoid it but it ran straight into the car and left a nice dent on a back door. The rest of the journey was through desert and wheat country until I got to the Darling Range, more hills than mountains but quite attractive.

My first impression of Perth was the heat, about 39 degrees. The city has had no rain for over three months, a record. I drove to the motel, Kings Park Lodge, where the university had booked me only to find it full until Sunday (I told the university I would arrive then). I stayed instead at the West Sands Motor Lodge in a luxurious room. The air conditioning was very good and most appreciated. On Saturday morning I did some shopping. I spent most of the afternoon watching the Sheffield Shield cricket on TV. On Sunday I moved to Kings Park Lodge, which is also very good. I spent most of the day having a look around the university and city. The university has the most attractive campus of any I have yet seen. The buildings are all in a Spanish style and the gardens are beautiful. Perth itself is also very pleasant. The Swan is a wide blue river, quite different from the Yarra. The main commercial centre is most prosperous in appearance. I had a smorgasbord lunch at the famous Parmelia Hotel. It was quite a spread, even better than that at Elanora. [I used to join my parents for lunch at the Elanora Country Club in Sydney]. I also visited Kings Park, a large area of natural bush very close to the city centre.

Today I have mainly spent at the university. I went to the administration people first and then to the Department of History. The person for whom I will be

working, Brian de Garis,¹³ was very pleasant and helpful. I also met a number of others, including Peter Reeves,¹⁴ the head of the department.

I have not yet got a phone installed in my imposing office so cannot yet tell you my number. However, should you urgently want to get hold of me you could ring the department through a person-to-person call and I could take it in the secretary's room.



The author's vehicle near Port Augusta in February 1975



The Arts Building, UWA, in February 1975

¹³ Brian de Garis was Senior Lecturer in History. He was later Professor of History at Murdoch University.

¹⁴ Peter Reeves was Professor of Modern History. He was later Deputy Vice Chancellor at Curtin University.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

<i>Professor of Medieval History</i>	H. E. Hallam, MA GradCertEd <i>Cantab.</i> , PhD <i>Nott.</i> , FRHistS, FAHA
<i>Professor of Modern History</i>	P. D. Reeves, MA DipEd <i>Tas.</i> , PhD <i>A.N.U.</i> , <i>Chairman of Department</i>
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<i>Lecturers</i>	F. J. A. Broeze, Drs <i>Ley.</i> C. T. Stannage, MA <i>W.Aust.</i> , PhD <i>Cantab.</i> C. H. H. Wake, MA <i>N.Z.</i> , PhD <i>A.N.U.</i> Y. W. Liu, MA <i>H.K.</i> , PhD <i>Lond.</i> Vacancy
<i>Temporary Lecturers</i>	A. J. Barker, BA <i>Sheff.</i> , MA <i>Syd.</i> , PhD <i>Lond.</i> E. D. Jones, MA <i>St. And.</i> , PhD <i>W.Aust.</i>
<i>Senior Tutors</i>	Penelope Hetherington, BA <i>Adel.</i> , MA <i>W.Aust.</i> Judith M. Woodward, BA <i>N.S.W.</i> , DipEd <i>Ncle</i>
<i>Temporary Senior Tutors</i>	M. Aveling, BA <i>Adel.</i> , PhD <i>Monash</i> D. S. Carment, BA <i>N.S.W.</i> M. C. Louis, MA <i>W.Aust.</i> , PhD <i>Manc.</i> K. I. McPherson, MA <i>W.Aust.</i> , PhD <i>A.N.U.</i> A. Rutherford, BA <i>W.Aust.</i> , MLitt <i>Edin.</i>
<i>Part-time Lecturer</i>	J. H. Reynolds, BA <i>Adel.</i> , MA <i>Oxon.</i> , Hon. LLD <i>W.Aust.</i>

Department of History staff list in early 1975

(The University of Western Australia 1975 Calendar, Nedlands, 1975)

UWA 3 March 1975

Thank you for your letters that reached me when I first got here.

I am still without permanent accommodation but this problem should be resolved within the next few days. I shall then be able to tell you where I am living. I have not yet had a phone installed in my office either though there are promises this shall be done over the next week.

Over the past several days I have been mainly settling down into my new job. My tutorials are not for a week yet. I have now met most members of the department's staff. Last Wednesday there was a departmental lunch in the staff club to farewell

Professor Bert Hallam,¹⁵ who is going on sabbatical. I was, by the way, having a drink with a few people in the staff club on Friday when I saw John Green¹⁶ [a friend from Sydney] there. He was visiting the university in connection with the computer company he works for. Over the last week, despite being Orientation Week, there were not many students around the campus but today the place suddenly burst into life with people everywhere.

Outside the university I continued my explorations of Perth. On Saturday I went into the city centre to see what the shops were like. The general impression I got was quite good. Like Sydney there are many specialty shops and arcades, though, of course, not on quite the same scale. On Sunday I visited some of the beaches. They are not as beautiful as those in Sydney and the surf is not as good. Otherwise I spent much of my spare time watching the cricket on TV. This weekend there is a very exciting game in progress between New South Wales and Western Australia.

UWA, 10 March 1975

Thank you very much for your last letters. I am glad to see that all continues to go well with you both.

Since I last wrote I have moved out of my motel into one of the university colleges, Currie Hall. I had some difficulty in finding accommodation as to begin with the colleges told me they were full and there also seemed to be a great shortage of available flats in the university area. Eventually I discovered a small flat in Subiaco and decided to move in there. On the next day, however, Currie Hall rang to say it had an available room after all. The flat was a rather depressing place so I at once decided to give it up. I will, fortunately, get the bond back and will only lose one week's rent of \$21.00. My room at Currie Hall is not nearly as large as the one I had at University House. But it is perfectly adequate and very inexpensive, only \$28.00 a week full board. If I cannot save any money this year I will never be able to! I think it is better that I live in a college as I have my meals prepared, my room cleaned and a chance to meet people.

As far as my work is concerned, I spent a lot of last week organising tutorial groups. I will now be having four tutorials in each course [a first year unit on colonial Australia, which ran for the whole year, and a third year half-unit on twentieth

¹⁵ Bert Hallam was Professor of Medieval History.

¹⁶ John Green worked in Information Technology.

century Australia, which ran until the middle of the year]. *All my tutorials are in the afternoon. I have a lot of students who are a great deal older than me, mostly public servants and housewives. I meet the first of them formally this afternoon when I take a first year class on the purpose of studying Australian history and a third year one on the 1909 Fusion of the non-Labor parties.*

Last Saturday I went to the city and did some shopping. I discovered a fascinating arcade called London Court, designed entirely in a mock-Tudor style. The shops in it were really very good indeed. Yesterday afternoon I took a three-hour ferry trip down the Swan River. It is certainly the best way to see Perth. You will have to do it when you come here. Some of the houses on the banks are very like those you see on the shores of Sydney's eastern suburbs. There were many yachts and small boats out. There was also one spectacular scene in which a man on a kite was about 50 feet above the river being pulled along by a speedboat below.



On the Swan River in March 1975

UWA 17 March 1975

It was good being able to speak with you both on the telephone last week and to get your interesting letters. I was amused to see the picture of Ann and Brook. [This was a newspaper picture of my sister Ann Stephenson¹⁷ and her young daughter Brook

¹⁷ Ann Stephenson, later Annie Carment, was a BA Honours student in Education at The University of Sydney. She later completed a Bachelor of Laws degree at UNSW and was Lecturer in Law at Macquarie University.

Stephenson¹⁸ on a bicycle.] *Did John*¹⁹ [Ann's husband] *arrange for their picture to be taken or were they in the right place at the right time?*

Since I last wrote my teaching has begun in earnest. I find the classes very mixed. Some are good and lively and others need a lot of prodding. The best students are the middle-aged housewives who are studying because they are genuinely interested and not mainly because it will help get them a job or get promoted. This week my third year people are discussing the conscription referendums of 1916 and 1917 and my first year students will talk about two books they have had to read.

On Wednesday I went to the first of the departmental staff meetings for the year. It was a very long affair with one person, Les Marchant,²⁰ insisting on speaking about every point raised and thus making things even slower than they might have otherwise been.

Last Saturday I went to the city again to do some shopping and had lunch in a very good Chinese restaurant. That afternoon I watched a rugby union match on the university oval. Rugby, rather surprisingly, is quite a big game, partly at least because of the large numbers of New Zealanders who seem to come here. [I usually went to these games with my colleague and friend Brian Stoddart²¹ and his wife Jean, both New Zealanders.] On Sunday morning I went for a long drive through Fremantle, Kwinana and Rockingham. Fremantle has the closest I have seen to slums in the state. Kwinana is a huge industrial complex. The countryside I passed was very barren and similar to the Nullarbor. Rockingham is a beach resort. The beach, though, has no proper surf and the Kwinana funnels dominate the horizon with their belching smoke. On the way back to Perth I drove inland and through some of the new outer suburbs. On Sunday afternoon I went for a swim at the Olympic pool in Claremont, the suburb next door to Nedlands. The water was quite cold, so I just swam lengths and then got out.

Perth is no longer the oven it was when I first arrived here. The weather is cool and crisp and not dissimilar to the autumns I am used to in Canberra. It rained at the university about a week ago, but not at the weather bureau. As a result, the city's record breaking dry spell continues.

¹⁸ Brook Stephenson, later Talulah Vane, was later a schoolteacher.

¹⁹ John Stephenson was a schoolteacher and later a nurse.

²⁰ Les Marchant was Associate Professor in History.

²¹ Brian Stoddart was Temporary Senior Tutor in History. He was later Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University.

Your plan to come here in July seems a good idea. I would not, however, recommend that you drive over. I think you would find it very tiring. It might be worthwhile to catch the Indian Pacific.

PS You might be interested to know Dad that Hughie Edwards²² is proving pretty unpopular as Governor. He has been sick for much of the time and has had a series of operations in London. Though people are sorry for him they also think he should resign from the job. [My father knew Edwards but they were not friends. Edwards resigned shortly after my letter was written.]

UWA 24 March 1975

Thanks so much for your letters and also, of course, your telephone call. I hope this letter reaches you in good time as the airhostesses' strike looks as though it might ground all aeroplanes and, consequently, letters from Perth as well. With one thing and another Western Australia is becoming steadily more isolated. Rain has cut the railway line, the planes might stop flying and the highway is crammed with hundreds of trucks carrying freight usually taken by train.

Life has continued on fairly normally since I last wrote. My third year tutorials on conscription were quite animated but not very many of the first year people did their reading. This week the third year tutorials are on the emergence of the Country Party and the first year ones on 'controversy in historical writing', during which I play a tape produced by the British Open University. [This was a debate on the English standard of living during the Industrial Revolution.] On Wednesday, all of the people in the department involved in teaching Australian history [I think this was just the first year unit] met for lunch and we planned the second term tutorials. [The group would have included Tom Stannage,²³ who was the unit coordinator, Marian Aveling,²⁴ Brian Stoddart and Lenore Layman.²⁵] I have now had quite a few third year essays to mark, the standard being very uneven. My marks so far have ranged from 50% to 74%.

²² Sir Hughie Edwards was Governor of Western Australia.

²³ Tom Stannage was Lecturer in History. He was later Executive Dean of Humanities and Professor of Public History at Curtin University.

²⁴ Marian Aveling was Temporary Senior Tutor in History. As Marian Quartly, she was later Dean of Arts and Professor of History at Monash University.

²⁵ Lenore Layman was a PhD student and a part-time tutor in History. She was later Associate Professor in History at Murdoch University.

On Saturday, as is now usual, I went into the city. I bought myself some new shoes and also looked for some trousers as well but could not find anything that I liked. On Sunday I drove to 'Yanchep Sun City', which, as you may remember, Alan Bond²⁶ hoped to make the venue for the next America's Cup challenge. The advertising for it is most misleading. It is at least one and a half hours' drive from Perth, not '25 minutes', and is surrounded by desert. The houses there are, however, quite pleasant and there is a good golf course. The beach is also attractive. But my overall impression is that the project is a bit of a flop. There were many empty houses with 'For Sale' signs. The place was hardly bustling with people.

I am not yet quite sure what I will do over Easter but may drive to the southwest and visit Albany and Bunbury. The area is supposed to be the most beautiful in the state so I suppose I should go and see it.

The weather here now is becoming quite cool. Over the last few days there has been a lot of rain. One marked difference between here and in the east is the lack of autumn colourings.

The leadership contest for the Liberal Party was all very interesting. Fraser²⁷ is a far more intelligent man than Snedden²⁸ [who Fraser deposed as federal Liberal leader] and a better speaker. Snedden's pomposity over the past year or so has been quite sickening and his talk, after the ballot, of his 'great services' to the country showed how little he has learned about practical politics. Fraser is, of course, aloof and, I have heard, difficult to work with but is the best the Liberals have at present. I remember just after the 1972 elections Dr Cairns²⁹ said the man the Labor Party would most fear as Liberal leader was Fraser.

I am glad that Ann and Brook will join you over Easter. When will Ann finish her thesis?

UWA 2 April 1975

Thanks again for your letters and your phone call Mum. I hope that by the time you get this the situation with My-Van and her sister [Tran Cam-Huong]³⁰ will have been

²⁶ Aland Bond was an entrepreneur.

²⁷ Malcolm Fraser was later Prime Minister of Australia.

²⁸ Billie, later Sir Billie, Snedden was later Speaker of the House of Representatives.

²⁹ Jim Cairns was a Labor federal government minister.

³⁰ Tran Cam-Huong was a university student in Saigon. She was later a Commonwealth public servant in Canberra.

clarified. [My-Van, who was from South Vietnam, was very worried about Cam-Huong's future if the Communists captured Saigon. My parents unsuccessfully attempted to assist Cam-Huong leave Saigon before that occurred. She later escaped on a refugee boat. Both she and My-Van became Australian citizens.]

I spent Easter partly in Perth and also in the state's southwest. On Friday I marked first year essays and that afternoon played tennis with some people from Currie Hall. As I had not played for a couple of months I was a bit rusty. The university courts are grass and this made things a bit difficult. On Saturday morning I drove south from Perth through Mandurah and Bunbury to Busselton, a pretty beach resort. I then went inland through magnificent timber country to Pemberton. The karri gum trees were enormous and quite unlike anything in the eastern states. I again headed for the coast and drove through some dairy and fruit growing areas to Albany. Albany has a splendid harbour, which I viewed to best advantage on top of a nearby hill just as the sun was setting. I had dinner in Albany and then drove to Mount Barker, where I put up my tent and spent the evening. On Sunday I returned to Perth along the Albany Highway. Monday was wet and miserable so I largely stayed indoors and finished marking my essays. Yesterday I had more tutorials than normal because of the Easter Monday holiday.

Please congratulate Tom³¹ for me on his art prize. [My brother Tom had just won the Berrima District Art Society award for 1975.]

UWA 7 April 1975

We have been touch so much by phone over the previous week that I have not really got very much to say at all. But I will give you what news I have.

Last week was spent in the normal way. Tutorials were on the historiographical controversy regarding the selection of Botany Bay and S.M. Bruce.³² Those on Bruce went very well indeed. Most students found him an interesting, almost unreal, character and had read the entertaining biography of him by Cecil Edwards. I finished marking the first year essays and handed them back. The quality was very uneven. My marks ranged from 35% to 80%.

On Saturday I played tennis with people from Currie Hall. I still find it hard playing on the grass courts. I will also have to do something about improving my

³¹ Tom Carment was an artist.

³² Stanley Bruce was non-Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

serve. In the afternoon I met Brian and Jean Stoddart to watch the university rugby team play Cottesloe. It was a very good match indeed with, fortunately, no real injuries occurring. Most of those who play rugby here are eastern staters, British migrants or New Zealanders. Sunday was mainly spent reading.

This morning I had a phone call from the Vice Chancellor's [Robert Whelan³³] wife [Helen Whelan]. She is a friend of Mrs Ramsay,³⁴ the wife of the Lieutenant Governor [James Ramsay³⁵]. Mrs Ramsay is a friend of Florence [Inglis, my maternal great aunt].³⁶ She asked me to join her family and the Ramsays at a barbecue on Sunday. I am really beginning to move in the right circles!

I hope all goes well with My-Van's sister. The fall of Saigon now seems less imminent than it was last week. This at least provides some sort of breathing space. I do, however, wonder how long it will be before the city is a besieged enclave as Phnom Penh now is. I also read that the Mayor of Saigon has prohibited the movement of civilians out of the city and that in the last few days President Thieu's³⁷ family have left the country. No wonder there is a lack of will to fight! With My-Van's sister the problem will largely be with the Vietnamese authorities. Her family will probably have to pay a bribe in order to get her the necessary exit documents.

I hope your weekend with the McMullins [who were family friends]³⁸ was enjoyable.

UWA 14 April 1975

Once again thank you so much for your very newsy letters. I was, of course, very sorry to see that your efforts to get Cam-Huong out of Saigon are so far unsuccessful but you have at least done the necessary paperwork in case both our own and the Vietnamese governments change their minds. There is a story in today's paper about the Vietnamese wife of an Australian journalist who has made two fruitless visits to Saigon over the past couple of weeks to get out her daughter from a previous marriage. A few days ago I met a man who has a Vietnamese fiancée in Saigon and

³³ Robert Whelan was later Vice Chancellor of University of Liverpool.

³⁴ Janet, later Lady, Ramsay.

³⁵ James Ramsay, a retired Royal Australian Navy Commodore, was also acting Governor. As Sir James Ramsay he was later Governor of Queensland.

³⁶ Florence Inglis lived in Sydney.

³⁷ Nguyen Van Thieu was President of South Vietnam.

³⁸ Bob McMullin was a dentist. He and his wife Vivie McMullin lived in Sydney.

she too has been refused an exit visa by her government. The fault, as you say Dad, seems to lie with both the Canberra and Saigon regimes. Perhaps if one side changes its mind the other might follow. I do, nevertheless, very much appreciate the efforts you have made.

Last week was fairly normal in most respects. I had the usual tutorials, this time on the Rum Rebellion and the rise and fall of the United Australia Party. On Wednesday we had a staff meeting mainly devoted to the question of external students, those outside the metropolitan area. The problem here is whether our own university or Murdoch University should have responsibility for them. [Murdoch was the recently established second university in Western Australia. A few of my colleagues were dismissive of it.]

On Friday evening a colleague from my department asked me to his flat for drinks and I did not get back home until 2.00 AM. On Saturday morning I bought some new clothes in the city and had lunch in a quite good Chinese restaurant there. In the afternoon I joined the Stoddarts to watch the university side play a rugby match against Western Suburbs. Our people were unfortunately quite badly beaten. On Sunday, as I mentioned last week, I went to lunch at the Vice Chancellor's house. The Lieutenant Governor and his wife and daughter were also there. The Vice Chancellor, his family and the Ramsays were delightful people. The meal was excellent. With Edwards' sudden retirement, Commodore Ramsay is a very busy man. He and his wife will soon move into Government House to look after [Princess] Anne³⁹ and Mark⁴⁰ [Phillips] while they are here. Lady Edwards⁴¹ apparently redecorated Government House with some very modern furniture. Mrs Ramsay intends to get rid of this and put back the antiques that were replaced. The area in which the Vice Chancellor lives, Dalkeith, is a very posh suburb indeed. It is rather like Pymble.

I got a letter from Steve Gutowski⁴² last week. He says his parents [who lived in Britain] will be here at the end of April and he will give you a ring about them dropping in to see you. I also got a letter from Robert Scoble⁴³ [a friend at UNSW and

³⁹ Princess Anne was later Princess Royal.

⁴⁰ Mark Phillips was Princess Anne's husband. They later divorced.

⁴¹ Dorothy, Lady Edwards was the wife of Sir Hughie Edwards.

⁴² Steve Gutowski was a PhD student in Biochemistry at University House. He was later a forensic scientist with the Victorian Police.

⁴³ Robert Scoble was later a diplomat, a telecommunications executive, a travel agent and an author.

ANU studying for a doctorate in Politics (which he did not complete) at University of Oxford] *on special presidential stationery. His term as President [of the Oxford Union, the famous English debating society] has just ended. He hopes to be back in Australia by the end of the year. 'I have', he wrote, 'enjoyed my Presidency very much indeed, not least all the publicity and being telephoned to give my views on political issues to newspapers. There was a marvellous article in one of the newspapers about me, and going through the lists of the three or four hundred of my predecessors – Prime Ministers such as Gladstone, Salisbury, Asquith, Macmillan, Heath, lots of Archbishops of Canterbury, and even writers such as Hillaire Belloc and John Buchan'. !!!!*

I will be quite busy this week as I have a paper to give at a seminar on Tuesday and marking to do.

UWA 21 April 1975

Thank you for your letters of 17 and 18 April, which I received this morning. I was interested in your description of the Chinese meal you went to. I went to similar ones in Canberra.

With the fall of Phnom Penh and the encirclement of Saigon the situation in Indochina gets steadily grimmer. I was glad the Khmer Rouge decided to recognise Sihanouk⁴⁴ as head of state. Although he will not probably have very much power, he will be a force for moderation. Did you watch the excellent, though very tragic, 'Four Corners' [a television current affairs program] on Vietnam on Saturday night?

Last week the third year tutorials on Lang⁴⁵ and the New Guard were quite successful but the first year students had some difficulties in their attempts to compare Governors Bourke⁴⁶ and Arthur.⁴⁷ On Tuesday night I gave a seminar paper ['Australian Liberal: The Political Education of Littleton Groom, 1867-1905', based on the first chapter of my PhD thesis] to the Australian history postgraduate seminar group. It was generally well received. On Wednesday I got a call from John Courtney [a University House friend],⁴⁸ who was in Perth for a day in the process of a tour of Australia he is making with other Foreign Affairs trainees. He saw me in my office

⁴⁴ Norodom Sihanouk was later King of Cambodia.

⁴⁵ Jack Lang was Labor Premier of New South Wales.

⁴⁶ Sir Richard Bourke was Governor of New South Wales.

⁴⁷ Sir George Arthur was Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land.

⁴⁸ John Courtney was a trainee diplomat. He was later an Australian ambassador.

but could not stay long as he had to look up some other friends of his and also show the trainees around because their proper guide had not turned up. [John was a UWA graduate.] On Saturday morning I played tennis again. I had a very energetic set of singles that I finally managed to win 11-9. I then played another set of doubles. On Sunday I lazed about and read.

As far as your visiting Perth is concerned, the 17 July seems all right to me. I will, of course, be working during the week but will be able to devote my time to showing you about at night and on the weekend. I will also be able to lend you my car, so you can sight see on your own while I am at work.

UWA 28 April 1975

I have just received word that my PhD oral exam in Canberra will be on Monday 12 May. I will probably fly to Canberra on the Saturday or Sunday. Would it be possible for me to spend a long weekend with you at Burradoo on the following Friday, Saturday and Sunday? I would then return to Perth on the Monday or Tuesday.

PS I might be able to leave here on Friday 9 May, in which case I could also see you on the weekend 10-11 May but I am not sure whether I can do so at this stage. Also, should My-Van be in touch with you in the near future, perhaps you could let her know. I only wrote to her on Friday so probably will not be writing again before I reach Canberra.

UWA 26 April 1975

Thank you for your very newsy letters. As always, I very much appreciated receiving them. Thank you also for the cutting [a pessimistic article by the historian Geoffrey Fairbairn⁴⁹ on Vietnam]. I know Geoffrey Fairbairn quite well. [He was a close friend of my supervisor Manning Clark.] He has always taken a strongly anti-Communist line in relation to Vietnam but is generally recognised, even by his opponents, as an authority on the subject. I only hope he is wrong on this occasion.

I had some very lively discussions in my first year tutorials on the foundation of the colony of Western Australia in 1829. Many of the students knew a great deal more about the subject than I did. But, then, so they should! The third year groups talked about the Egon Kisch affair in 1934. I don't know whether either of you

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Fairbairn was Reader in History at ANU.

remember it but Kisch was a Czech journalist whom the Australian government unsuccessfully attempted to deport because of his supposed Communist connections. Among other things he was subjected to a dictation test in Gaelic. This method was overruled by the High Court. Some local Scots were upset!

On Wednesday morning a person in our department gave a seminar. Afterwards we all had lunch at the staff club and did not emerge until about 3.00 PM. On Thursday evening Currie Hall had its term dinner dance. This was a very enjoyable occasion. The food was quite good as was the band. I did not get to bed until well after midnight.

On the following morning [a public holiday] I joined other people from the Hall in a journey to Rottnest Island. It is a two-hour boat trip from Perth. We got there at 11.00 AM. We hired bicycles and cycled around the island. No cars are allowed. It was somewhat larger than I expected and really quite pretty. The interior is rather barren but along the coast are very attractive bays and beaches. It is a favourite holiday spot for people from Perth. After getting back to Perth at about 6.00 PM I went to dinner at a house occupied by some Thai postgraduate students, one of whom knows the friend from Currie Hall, Astrid Fernandes,⁵⁰ who went with me. We had a magnificent meal and I am afraid that I ate far too much. I was quite exhausted when I got to bed. I slept very soundly until 9.00 AM the next morning.

On Saturday morning I went to the city where I did some shopping. I was afraid that because of the long weekend many shops would be shut but this, fortunately, was not the case. I had a good lunch at a Chinese restaurant. In the afternoon I joined the Stoddarts to watch the university's first grade rugby side play a very hard fought match against Perth, which they eventually won 10-7. Today is very wet and miserable.

I received last week a letter from My-Van in which she said she might go for a holiday in England should Saigon fall. I wrote back and told her that it was probably the best thing she could do. [She would join her future husband Fred Robins,⁵¹ who then lived in London.] She also said she might stay with you soon. I hope she does as it would do her good to get out of Canberra for a while. I was, of course, appalled at

⁵⁰ Astrid Fernandes was a PhD student in Agriculture. She later worked at Queensland Agricultural College and as a psychologist in Brisbane.

⁵¹ Fred Robins was a British diplomat. He was later Senior Lecturer in Business at The University of Adelaide.

the Australian government's inaction on the refugee question. They no doubt feel that this is a good way to win favour from the almost certain new government in Saigon. History has shown that such weakness is no way to deal with Communists.



The author at Rottnest Island in April 1975

UWA 5 May 1975

It was good speaking with you on the telephone last week. I called My-Van not long afterwards when I heard that Saigon had fallen. Did you see her letter in last Friday's Australian? There is, I suppose, a very slim chance that some members of her family managed to get on one of the last ships or planes but it is unlikely. Already a massacre seems to have started in Cambodia. I would not be surprised if one follows in Vietnam before not too long.

I took tutorials with the first year people on attitudes of white people towards Aborigines before 1850 and we had very spirited discussions. Some of the students' racist attitudes are really appalling. With the third year tutorials we talked about the suppression of the Australia First Movement. Last Friday I lectured on Australian Communism during the Second World War [the subject of my Honours thesis]. It was a rather nerve racking experience [it was my first lecture]. I think my material was quite reasonable but I did not present it well.

On Saturday I shopped in the city. I bought myself a new suitcase and shirt. On Saturday evening I went with some friends to see 'The Boyfriend', a play put on by the University Dramatic Society. It was very professionally done and most enjoyable. Two of my students had parts in it. On Sunday I went to lunch at the home of a Chinese lecturer in our department, Liu Yat-wing.⁵² He has quite a large house in Floreat Park, a suburb about six kilometres from the university. We had a magnificent Chinese meal consisting of rice, cauliflower, beef, prawns, chicken and duck. Tonight I am going to dinner with Estie Bav,⁵³ a Cambodian friend from Currie Hall, at the restaurant in Kings Park.

As far as my flying to Canberra is concerned I have now made the bookings. They are, however, not the ones I wanted. I could not get flights on either Saturday or Sunday so I am leaving Perth at 11.45 PM on Thursday. I get to Canberra at 8.55 AM on the following day (TAA flight 410 from Melbourne). I will, no doubt, spend much of Friday asleep and Saturday and Sunday preparing for my oral. I hope to see you both on the next Thursday or Friday. I will fly back to Perth on the Tuesday of the following week. I will, of course, give you a call when I get to Canberra.

I was away from Perth between 9 and 20 May. I stayed at University House. My oral examination at ANU was with Fin Crisp and Roger Joyce. I had to also answer Trevor Reese's written questions. Mick Williams,⁵⁴ Head of the Department of History in the School of General Studies at ANU, took us to lunch afterwards. Fin and Roger hinted that my thesis was okay but I was worried about Trevor Reese. I saw various friends in Canberra and also visited my parents at Burradoo from 16 to 18 May.

⁵² Liu Yat-wing later worked in Hong Kong.

⁵³ Estie Bav was a Dentistry student. She was later a dentist in Melbourne.

⁵⁴ Mick Williams was also Professor of History at ANU.



**Don Vandenberg,⁵⁵ Tran My-Van, the author and Diana Carment at Burradoo
in May 1975**

UWA 25 May 1975

Thank you so very much for looking after me so well last weekend. It was, of course, very good to see you again and I hope it will not be too long before we are able to arrange another meeting. My 'flu has now disappeared and all I am left with are a few sniffles. I only hope that I did not pass it on to either of you.

On Monday I had lunch with Peter Spearritt,⁵⁶ brother of Tom's old girlfriend, who is now in the final year of his PhD on Sydney between 1920 and 1950. Also with us was Heather Radi,⁵⁷ who used to lecture me at New South Wales and has now moved to Sydney. That night I had dinner at Steve Gutowski's place in Hughes. His parents seem to have really enjoyed themselves in Australia and had left on the previous day. Afterwards I had him, John Courtney, Rowland Sammut,⁵⁸ and Barry⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Don Vandenberg was a PhD student in Astronomy at University House. He was later Professor of Astronomy at University of Victoria in Canada.

⁵⁶ Peter Spearritt was a PhD student in ANU's Urban Research Unit. He was later Professor of History at The University of Queensland.

⁵⁷ Heather Radi was Senior Lecturer in History at The University of Sydney.

⁵⁸ Rowland Sammut was a PhD student in Mathematics at University House. He was later Professor of Mathematics at UNSW.

⁵⁹ Barry Nagorcka was a Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) scientist.

and Karin Nagorcka⁶⁰ around for drinks in my room. John will go to Beirut soon to learn Arabic. He will then join the Australian embassy in Saudi Arabia. Rowland leaves Canberra at the end of the year to take up a postdoctoral fellowship in Southampton. On Tuesday, shortly before leaving Canberra, I had a drink with Frank Crowley,⁶¹ my old supervisor from New South Wales. Don Vandenberg then drove me to the airport, where my plane departed at 6.35 PM. I finally reached Perth at 11.30 PM (1.30 AM your time). A couple of friends met me there and drove me to Currie Hall, where I had a good long sleep.

On Wednesday and Thursday I worked in the department on my tutorials for next term. In the first week I have to take one on religion in Australia before 1850 and another on the Petrov Affair in which a Soviet diplomat and his wife defected to Australia. On Friday I went to a meeting of all those involved in teaching the first year Australian history course. Last night I took Estie to see Rudolf Nureyev and the London Festival Ballet perform 'Sleeping Beauty'. It was a superb performance, much better than the Australian Ballet's one I saw in Canberra. I strongly recommend you see it when it gets to Sydney. I spent most of today reading in my room.

UWA 1 June 1975

Thanks for your news and phone call. It was, as always, good to hear from you.

I hope your weather is better than it is in Perth at present. The last week was wet and miserable.

My first year tutorials on religion in early nineteenth century Australia did not go over very well. Most students found it difficult to come to grips with the subject. My third year groups, however, were far more vocal on the Petrov Affair

From Monday until Friday Allan Martin was a visitor in our department. He was formerly Professor of History at La Trobe University and is at present a Senior Fellow at ANU. He is an expert on politics in nineteenth century New South Wales and is currently writing a biography of Sir Henry Parkes.⁶² On Tuesday evening he gave a staff seminar on 'The 1854 Committee on Intemperance', which he presented in a most amusing fashion. Afterwards we all went off to dinner at a local restaurant.

⁶⁰ Karin Nagorcka was a schoolteacher. She was later a school principal.

⁶¹ Frank Crowley was Dean of Arts and Professor of History at UNSW.

⁶² Sir Henry Parkes was non-Labor Premier of New South Wales.

The subject of the paper did not noticeably affect the subsequent proceedings! We had a very pleasant time. I did not get to bed until quite late. On the following evening I dined with Allan and Brian de Garis at the latter's home. Afterwards we went to listen to him again, this time on 'Biography as a Genre'. He was, once more, very interesting.

Yesterday morning I shopped in the city. The place was full of American sailors as the aircraft carrier USS Coral Sea is berthed near Fremantle. I spent most of yesterday afternoon listening to records. Last night I watched TV. Did you see the four women parliamentarians on 'Four Corners'? I thought Margaret Guilfoyle,⁶³ the Liberal shadow Education minister, was particularly impressive. Today I was supposed to play tennis but the bad weather stopped that. I mainly stayed in my room and read.

It will be interesting to see whether or not Mr Barnard⁶⁴ resigns [from the federal House of Representatives]. If he does the result might be disastrous for Labor. It would possibly mean a cabinet 'spill' and certainly the loss of his seat to the Liberals. Did you read that John Kerin⁶⁵ [my parents' local member of the House of Representatives] is being mentioned as a possible new minister? Whitlam's⁶⁶ best interests would lie in persuading Barnard to stay until the next election.

You might be interested in reading the next issue of the Bulletin. It is going to have an article by Luu Tuong Quang,⁶⁷ formerly Counsellor at the South Vietnamese embassy in Canberra, which describes his very dramatic escape from Saigon. I knew him quite well when he was in Canberra. He is a pretty impressive person. At the height of the anti Vietnam War campaign he addressed countless meetings at which he was the subject of a great deal of abuse from radical students. He was a friend of My-Van's family so I wonder if he saw them before his departure. He left his own family in Canberra before he returned to Saigon at the end of last year.

UWA 8 June 1975

⁶³ Margaret, later Dame Margaret, Guilfoyle was later a non-Labor federal government minister.

⁶⁴ Lance Barnard was a Labor federal government minister.

⁶⁵ John Kerin was later a Labor federal government minister.

⁶⁶ Gough Whitlam was Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

⁶⁷ Luu Tuong Quang was later Head of Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Radio.

Thanks for your very newsy letters. I am, of course, sorry that you will not be making it to Perth but understand the reasons why. [My parents decided to postpone the trip as they had recently seen me.] Everyone tells me that the best time to see Western Australia is in spring when all the wildflowers are out. The winter tends to be rather dismal and wet. However, should you decide to visit Malaysia and Singapore rather than going to Queensland, Perth is a logical place to stop off for a while. I am sure that there is much here that would interest you but agree that to pay over \$600 for a journey here is a bit exorbitant.

My tutorials over the past week were on the Eureka Stockade. My third year groups did not meet as they had long research essays to hand in. The discussions on Eureka were generally quite lively. I tried to place the emphasis on Eureka's significance on the development of an Australian national tradition. All the staff members involved in the first year course met last Monday to standardise the marking of essays. We discovered how much we disagreed about the sample essays we looked at. It was just as well the students were not there to see us!

Last Thursday night I went with friends to the Perth Concert Hall to see Los Indios Tabajaras, a Brazilian guitar group. It was very good indeed. Half the program was popular music and the other half classical. The Concert Hall is a most impressive place. It has only been open for about a year. Afterwards we went to a local pancake restaurant where I had a bacon pancake. I am sure Dad would have loved it. [My father's favourite food was bacon sandwiches.] Yesterday I shopped and then had a Chinese meal in the city. This morning I played a very energetic game of tennis. I was, rather unusually, on the winning side. In two sets of doubles my partner and I won 6-3 and 12-10.

What do you think of the political news [regarding a federal cabinet reshuffle]? It really is a bit like a game of musical chairs. It also appears as a very decided swing to the right. I was very surprised indeed to see Riordan⁶⁸ elected to the ministry. He is without doubt the most conservative man in the parliamentary Labor Party and was once an active 'grouper' [a member of an industrial group that aimed to combat Communism in the union movement]. Hayden⁶⁹ was the best person to choose as

⁶⁸ Joe Riordan was a Labor federal government minister.

⁶⁹ Bill Hayden was a Labor federal government minister. He was later Governor General of Australia.

Treasurer but his task will be very difficult. McClelland⁷⁰ also seems a sensible choice as Labour minister but, once again, his task will be hard. What above all else the recent events exhibit is Whitlam's lack of ideological conviction. He moves from right to left and back again with little hesitation. We had first hand experience of this in the case of the Vietnamese refugees. The cabinet reshuffle is another instance of it. If there were an election now the Liberals would win with an overwhelming majority.

There have been a few jobs advertised recently that I intend to apply for. They are at Macquarie University, the University of the South Pacific and James Cook University. The latter is the most hopeful. It is a lectureship right in my field – twentieth century Australian political history.

Thank you for passing on My-Van's letters. She seems to be enjoying herself [on a holiday in England]. Although regular press reports are coming out of Saigon none of the Vietnamese students I know has received any word from friends and relatives there.

UWA 15 June 1975

Thank you both, once again, for your letters. You always seem to be able to give me so much news, far more than I give you. I very much appreciate getting them.

The past week has, I am afraid, been rather uneventful. My first year tutorials were on the bushrangers and discussion went quite well. The third year groups talked about the struggle for the succession to Harold Holt.⁷¹ From this week the third year course is over and I will now devote most of my efforts to nineteenth century Australia. I will, however, be quite busy for some time marking third year students' long research essays. I have just finished a batch on popular recreation in Perth between 1910 and 1914 that I found interesting. In the third term I am offering two 'special topic' courses, one on liberalism in Australia before 1901 and the other on the coming of Federation. [Although inexplicably not mentioned in my letters, between the end of the third year course and the start of the special topics I enjoyed and learned much from tutorials that I took for Brian de Garis in his historiography course.]

Socially there has not been very much on at all. Yesterday I mainly read in my room and listened to records. Today I took a new colleague in the department Rob

⁷⁰ Jim McClelland was a Labor federal government minister.

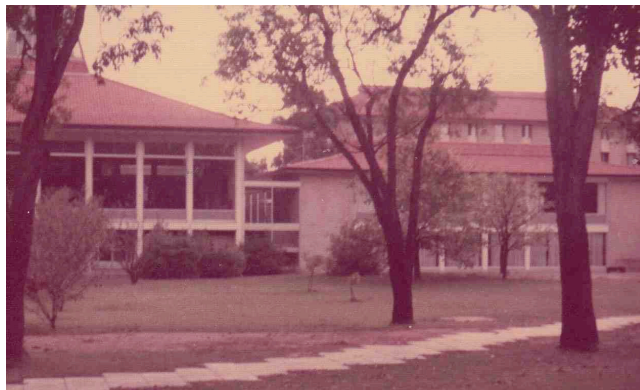
⁷¹ Harold Holt was non-Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

Stuart⁷² and his wife Jan,⁷³ both Canadians, for a drive around Perth. [I became good friends with Rob and Jan. Rob, a modern Europe specialist, had an office close to mine.]

Did you see that Manning Clark is now an AC [Companion of the Order of Australia]? I am sure he will be delighted. It is a great honour for the historical profession in this country. I have written him a letter of congratulation.

I got a postcard from My-Van and Fred on Monday from the 'other' Perth in Scotland. My-Van said she looked for me there but I did not appear to be around!

Some of the photographs posted to my parents in mid June 1975 are below.



Currie Hall in June 1975



The author in his room at Currie Hall in June 1975

⁷² Rob Stuart was Lecturer in History. He was later Associate Professor in History.

⁷³ Jan Stuart was a UWA administrative staff member.



Two views of the author's UWA office in June 1975

UWA 22 June 1975

Thanks again for your letters. It seems strange over here in Perth to read of the snow in your area. Were you affected by any of the strong winds that hit Sydney? I hope you got the photos I sent you. They are not of great interest but I thought you might like to have some idea of where and how I live.

Tutorials over the last week were on faction politics in New South Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century. There is a considerable debate among historians on this topic. One side argues that factions were little more than groups of politicians seeking their own personal advancement. The other side sees the factions as being more organised and providing the foundations of today's party system.

Other than taking tutorials, much of my time was spent in marking the third year research essays. I have now had subjects ranging from foreign policy since 1945 to popular recreation in Kalgoorlie in 1906. The students have done a lot of work for the essays but there are few really good ones. I am also examining an Honours thesis on Liberal governments' policies towards China from 1949 to the appointment of an Ambassador to Taiwan in 1966.

On Wednesday I went to a very interesting seminar give by Liu Yat-wing. It was on the origins of the Chinese administrative system in the early Ch'ing dynasty

(that is from about 1644 to about 1700). He showed us lots of slides of imperial palaces in Peking to illustrate some of the points he made.

On Friday evening I went to a dinner dance at Currie Hall. There were two bands, one a Greek bouzouki band and the other a rock band. The Greek group was far better. I had a very enjoyable time and did not get to bed until quite late.

On Saturday morning I went to town to do some shopping. [My shopping trips usually involved looking for books, clothes and records.] On the afternoon I went with some friends to Mundaring Weir, situated about 40 kilometres from Perth. It is in beautiful wooded mountain country and is the source of the eastern goldfields' water supply. That night I went to see the Mansudae Art Troupe from North Korea. It was very good indeed. I did, though, tire of the announcer talking about 'the glorious inspiration of Marshal Kim Il-Sung⁷⁴ and the 'anti-fascist, anti-imperialist struggle'. The troupe consisted of singers, dancers, musicians and acrobats. The latter were unbelievable in some of the feats they performed. One act consisted of a girl jumping off a springboard and landing on a man's head and then staying there for a few minutes. Today I have read and listened to records.

I have still heard nothing more on my PhD thesis. I hope that does not mean I will have re-writing to do though I am beginning to worry that might be so.

UWA 29 June 1975

Thank you again for your letters. It was very good that you were able to sell the land and the flat. [My parents had just sold a paddock at Burradoo and a home unit in Sydney.] I was interested to see that you are thinking of going to Hawaii. But now you have got the extra money why don't you go to Southeast Asia instead? More importantly, if you did that you could see me on the way! Seriously, a trip through Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand would be fascinating – far more so than going to Hawaii again, a place you know very well already. [My plea worked. Shortly after receiving this letter my parents decided to visit me in Perth during July.]

You are, no doubt, very pleased about the Bass by-election result. [My parents were both Liberal supporters.] It was an extraordinary swing to the Liberals. I expected them to win but the magnitude of their victory was much greater than I predicted. More than anything else it is a personal triumph for Fraser, who really

⁷⁴ Kim Il-Sung was Supreme Leader of North Korea.

threw himself into the contest and fought it on national issues. Before yesterday I would have been confident that Dunstan⁷⁵ would win quite easily in South Australia but now I am not so sure.

Last week was not one of much excitement for me. My tutorials were on the bourgeoisie's role in the second half of the nineteenth century with special reference to Melbourne. One of my tutorials took a pleasant turn when a student told us that his wife just had a baby. Following the tutorial we all adjourned to a local hotel to celebrate. I have been working hard in preparation for my special topic course on Federation. I have now written three lectures out of the six for it.

Yesterday I played tennis in the morning and was beaten 6-4, 6-2 and 6-3 by a person against whom I usually win. It was most humiliating! I later went into town where I did some shopping. Last night Estie asked me to dinner. [I think this was in a communal kitchen/dining room at Currie Hall.] There were quite a few people there and we had an excellent meal. She is fortunate that she is now an Australian citizen and her, mother, brother and sister all live here. But her father is still in Cambodia. She has not heard anything at all since the fall of Phnom Penh. [Estie made many efforts, including a visit to Cambodia, over a long period to find out what happened to her father and other family members but with no success.]

I had a long letter from My-Van last week. She has now got back from Scotland, where she bought many new clothes. She saw Ian Hamill⁷⁶ and Mike Perry.⁷⁷ I also received a letter from Ann. She told me about her friend's bike accident. It was pretty nasty, wasn't it? [Andrew FitzSimons⁷⁸ was badly injured while riding his motorbike.]

This afternoon, weather permitting, I may go for a drive somewhere in the nearby countryside.

UWA 6 July 1975

Thanks once again for your letters. It will not be long now before I see you both here. I have booked your motel accommodation at Kings Park Lodge, Thomas Street,

⁷⁵ Don Dunstan was Labor Premier of South Australia.

⁷⁶ Ian Hamill was a Master of Arts (MA) student in History at University House. He later worked in the British civil service.

⁷⁷ Mile Perry was a non-degree student in Astronomy at University House. He later worked in the British private sector.

⁷⁸ Andrew FitzSimons was a schoolteacher and later a school principal.

Subiaco. It is not the most luxurious establishment of its kind but I found it very comfortable. The rooms are air-conditioned with TV, radio, fridge etc. The motel is only about a year old and is five minutes' drive from the university. I will, of course, meet you at the airport but will have to get back to the university by 3.00 PM for a tutorial. I have no classes at all on Friday, so that might be a good time to show you around Perth. On the weekend I thought you might like to go to the southwest – Bunbury, Busselton, Pemberton, Albany etc. It is very attractive though at this time of year it might be a bit wet. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday you will be left to your own devices to some extent as I have tutorials on all those days. I will lend you my car so that you can tour around.

I will have another visitor on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday this week in the form of My-Van. I got a phone call from her and Fred on Friday all the way from London. It will be very good to see her again. Both she and Fred asked me to pass on their best wishes to you. I have also booked her into Kings Park Lodge. The manager there should be paying me a commission. There is no news yet about the fate of my PhD but I was pleased to learn last Monday that the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society accepted for publication an article I submitted to it. My title is 'The Making of an Australian Liberal: The Political Education of Littleton Groom, 1867-1905'.⁷⁹ When I have time I will write another.

There were no first year tutorials last week so I got ahead writing lectures for my special topic courses. I am also preparing for next week's tutorial on ecological history – quite fascinating. One of the interesting points is the manner in which the Aborigines had highly sophisticated techniques of using fire to clear undergrowth, allow fresh grass to grow for game they could hunt, create tracks etc. On Wednesday I went to a departmental seminar by Tony Rutherford⁸⁰ on 'Aspects of Celtic Studies'. An enjoyable lunch followed it.

Yesterday I played tennis in the morning and mainly read in the afternoon. Last night I watched the Wimbledon finals on TV. I was glad [Arthur] Ashe won. It will do [Jimmy] Connors the world of good to have his ego deflated.

⁷⁹ vol 62, no 4, 1977.

⁸⁰ Tony Rutherford was Temporary Senior Tutor in History. He was later the staff member of a non-Labor federal parliamentarian.

What do you think of the mess in federal politics? People were worried how Fraser would perform as Opposition Leader yet now he probably does not have to do anything at all other than to sit back and watch the government commit suicide.

My-Van's visit from 10 to 13 July went well. I showed her around Perth and introduced her to people I knew. On one evening I took her to dinner at the excellent Oyster Beds restaurant in Fremantle. On another we joined Estie and my friend and colleague Ernie Jones,⁸¹ a Scottish medievalist, for dinner at El Sombrero restaurant on the Swan River at Crawley.



**Ernie Jones, Estie Bav, Tran My-Van and the author at El Sombrero, Crawley
in July 1975**

Telegram from UWA 15 July 1975

HAVE GOT PHD [The news came as a great relief. I celebrated it with colleagues and friends.]

⁸¹ Ernie Jones was Temporary Lecturer in History. He was later Associate Professor in History.

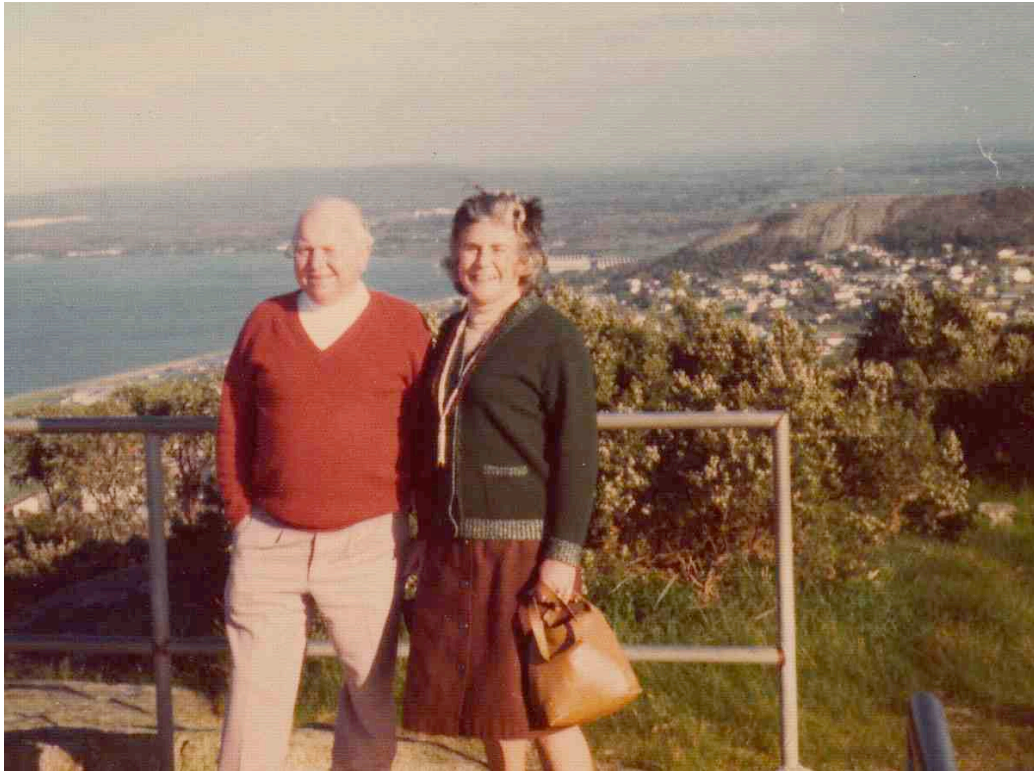
My parents' visit from 17 to 24 July also went well. It was great that they were in Perth to celebrate my PhD. I showed them around Perth and they also drove to various parts of the city while I was working. On 19 and 20 July we toured the southwest, staying at Albany for a night. The weather was generally wet and windy but we all enjoyed ourselves. Albany greatly impressed them.



The windswept author near Bunbury in July 1975



The author with his vehicle near Albany in July 1975



Maxwell and Diana Carment at Albany in July 1975

UWA 11 August 1975

Thanks, once again, for your letters. It was good that you enjoyed your holiday so much. I trust that all was well at Burradoo on your return.

The term ended last week. All I had to do so far as teaching was concerned was to hold a couple of administrative meetings for my third term special topic groups. I have, nevertheless, been busy preparing lectures. I hope to get these finished by the second week of the vacation. On Wednesday I attended a very interesting seminar by Iain Brash⁸² from my department about a remarkable English gentleman called A.J. Munby, a Victorian solicitor who had a craving for workingwomen and was secretly married to one for many years. That evening I attended another seminar by a PhD student at Murdoch University, Rob Pascoe,⁸³ on Australian historiography since 1930.

On Friday evening I went to dinner with friends at The Silver Dragon Chinese restaurant. I wasn't too bad but was not up to the standards of The Lotus in Canberra

⁸² Iain Brash was Senior Lecturer in History.

⁸³ Rob Pascoe was later Dean of Arts and Professor of History at Victoria University in Australia.

[a favourite with my parents and me]. *On Saturday morning I shopped in town. I bought a book about [King] Edward VIII by Frances Donaldson that I am currently reading. It is fascinating and takes a critical stance. On Sunday I played tennis in the morning and did some work in the afternoon.*

Last week I got a letter from Sylvia Thomm,⁸⁴ who, you might remember, stayed with us at Burradoo for an evening last year. She and her recently acquired Canadian fiancée Michael Tooley⁸⁵ are going to Sydney at the end of August. She asked if they could call in on you. I wrote back to say I thought it would be okay and asked her to ring you in advance. I hope you don't mind but she is a good friend of mine and I would be very grateful if you could look after them.

UWA 17 August 1975

Thanks for your letters. It was good speaking to you on the phone as well. I look forward to seeing you both again in Canberra next month [for my PhD graduation ceremony at ANU]. I will arrive there on the Thursday evening or Friday morning and leave again on the Sunday. I am, of course, very grateful to you for enabling me to attend. [I was doubtful about going because of the cost but my father insisted on paying for my air ticket.]

You are no doubt concerned about what Tuesday's federal budget will bring. It looks as if it will not please anyone very much. Businessmen will probably see it as not going far enough in their direction while others will be upset about the cut backs in government expenditure. I hope the reductions in university expenditure are not too savage. If they are academic vacancies will become almost non-existent. Already some universities have put a freeze on the advertising and filling of new positions until they see what the budget contains.

The university was pretty quiet this week. There are not many students about because of the vacation. A lot of staff members are away as well. I spent much of my time preparing lectures. I only have one more to finish. I rather regret not taking last week off, as the weather was glorious – five days without rain. The wildflowers are just beginning to appear. I am told that within a few weeks they should be quite a sight.

⁸⁴ Sylvia Thomm, later Sylvia Tooley, was a PhD student in Sociology at ANU.

⁸⁵ Michael Tooley was Research Fellow in Philosophy at ANU. He was later Professor of Philosophy at University of Colorado.

On Tuesday I ate with colleagues at the Bombay Colonial Restaurant in the city. The food was very good but my 'mild' curry was scorching. There are many Indian restaurants in Perth and a large Indian population.

Yesterday, being Saturday, it poured with rain. I went to town in the hope of buying all the birthday presents. [My mother, father, brother, sister and grandfather all had birthdays in August and September.] But I could not find anything I really wanted. Tom is particularly difficult, as I don't know what his needs are. If I cannot find anything for him soon I will send you a cheque and perhaps you could buy him something.

Last night I went to dinner at Estie's parents' place. Her mother Esther Neilson cooked a very good Chinese meal. Her stepfather Dennis Neilson is a former Major in the Black Watch who is now the Perth manager of a firm of architects. She has a seven-year-old half sister Rebecca, who, like many Eurasian children, is very beautiful. I got back home quite late, just in time to hear the end of the day's cricket. Australia needs a miracle to win this test.

As far as your problem regarding Burradoo is concerned [my parents were considering moving back to Sydney because of the increasing amount of time my father was working there], at this stage you would be silly to move again. I know you find the separation hard but I think you would discover that living in Sydney again would be much too hectic for you.

I hope your weekend with My-Van and Ann went well. It was My-Van's birthday a couple of weeks ago. I only just remembered in time so I hope she got my present before it was too late.

UWA 24 August 1975

Thanks for your letter Mum. You certainly have had a lot of visitors recently. I got letters from My-Van and Algy last week that were written before they left for Burradoo. Algy was looking forward to his holiday in Sydney. I do not, though, think he will be very happy about having to prepare new lectures. He used to tell me that he wrote his lectures on very good quality paper so they would last a long time. I do not envy John Courtney living in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia but he was quite enthusiastic about his posting when I saw him in May.

The family birthday season is fast approaching. I have, at last, bought all the presents, including Tom's. I hope to post them to you tomorrow. I am, of course, sorry

that I will not be with you to celebrate. You will have to accept my birthday wishes from afar.

I have booked my flights to Canberra for the graduation. I am going by TAA flights 5 and 496. The latter arrives at Canberra at 8.15 PM on Thursday 11 September.

It was another quiet week at the university. Most of the students and many staff members were absent. I went into my office every day. I prepared a bibliography for what I hope will be my next research project, a book about the 1901 federal election. [I completed a good deal of research for this until the end of 1976 but my move to Rockhampton in 1977 made further research on it much more difficult. I reluctantly postponed the project to focus on the history of Central Queensland and never returned to it.]

The weather was quite good until the usual rain on Saturday. Estie and other friends joined me in going for early morning swims at the Beatty Park heated pool. Although the early rising was hard I felt very invigorated afterwards.

Yesterday I went with Tom Stannage and his son to watch my first Australian Rules football match, Swan Districts versus West Perth. It was quite exciting and more enjoyable than I expected. Swans won by a huge margin, which greatly pleased Tom as he used to be one of their first grade players. Just as interesting as the game were some of the spectators. The umpire was frequently abused. I was told this was quite normal. Arguments also developed between supporters of the opposing sides. The Swans supporters welcomed their team to the field with a very loud recording of the team song and dancing girls.

What did you think of the federal budget? It does not appear to be as horrific as expected while most sections of the press received it quite well. You would, no doubt, have referred more incentives for business but I don't see how the government could have cut its spending further without abandoning much of the program on which it was elected. The universities were not treated as badly as some predicted but they still have to make some drastic economies next year. The deferral of the implementation of the reports of the various education commissions was a retrogressive step.

I have just finished reading Charles Perkins⁸⁶ autobiography A Bastard Like Me. It is a most interesting book. I do not agree with all his views but am now more sympathetic to him. The early part of the book that deals with his childhood as an illegitimate 'half caste' in a poverty-stricken reserve near Alice Springs is particularly moving. I am now reading Christopher Hibbert's Garibaldi and His Enemies.

I am not too sure whether or not to go away this vacation. It might be better to leave it until stuvac [the students' study vacation] when they are no school children about and the water is warm enough for swimming.

UWA 31 August 1975

Thank you so much for your letters and the cheque. I hope the family birthday party went well and that Tom enjoyed his 21st. I also hope that my presents arrived safe and sound. Perth has run out of jiffy bags so I wrapped them in brown paper instead.

The main news from here is, I am afraid, not very happy. Due to the budget cuts UWA has put a temporary freeze on filling job vacancies and made reductions in its research expenditure. This freeze could be lifted or lessened once the Australian Universities Commission determines which university receives what but all universities must make economies. Similar freezes to ours are in place at other universities and colleges of advanced education. This greatly affects me. As things stood I had a good chance of being reappointed at the end of the year and some chance of getting the vacant permanent position in my department. [Once the freeze was lifted the advertised tenured Senior Tutorship in Australian history went, as it should have, to Marian Aveling, who was far more experienced than me.] Peter Reeves is trying hard to ensure that Marian Aveling and I can stay on, as exceptions to the freeze will be made in very special cases. Without us the teaching of Australian history would be far more difficult but I am sure other departments have similar special cases. I cannot understand how Malcolm Fraser can complain that the government's spending cuts are not great enough. Education was, after all, supposed to be treated lightly in comparison with other public sector areas. People don't seem to realise that just because the overall spending on universities increased by about four per cent over last year's figure, this is a decrease of about 14 per cent once

⁸⁶ Charles Perkins was an Aboriginal activist and later a senior Commonwealth public servant.

inflation is taken into account. I hope the private sector appreciates its tax cuts as they were only achieved at the expense of others.

I have various job applications in but many of them are, no doubt, to places in a similar situation to the university here. The only job I have applied for outside Australia is in Fiji. The university there took up my references, which is always a hopeful sign, but the job is not in my field. Outside the tertiary area I applied to be a Parliamentary Fellow in Canberra. I might have a reasonable chance here but in most cases the fellowships go to political scientists.

I did not, as I hoped, get away last week. Instead I was very busy. I examined two Honours theses, which took a lot of time. I also had many students visiting me to seek advice on their essays. Professor John La Nauze of ANU⁸⁷ is currently in Perth. He is an expert on Australian federation so I asked him to attend my first lecture on the subject next week and speak to the students. He agreed, which meant that I altered what I was intending to say.

I am continuing my early morning swims. I don't know whether I will keep them up once the term begins. I find that instead of going to bed at about midnight I am now feeling very sleepy at about 10.00 PM.

Yesterday I again went to the football with Tom Stannage. Also with us was Geoff Bolton,⁸⁸ the Professor of History at Murdoch University. This time Tom was very annoyed that Subiaco, a team close to the bottom, defeated Swan Districts, which is at the top of the premiership table.

The weather is much better these days. The spring wildflowers are blooming. Kings Park is full of different colours. I will probably walk there this afternoon to take some pictures.

I am really looking forward to seeing you both next week.

UWA 6 September 1975

I am writing this letter a day earlier than usual to make sure that it reaches you before I see you on Friday. I am arriving in Canberra, as I think I mentioned in an earlier letter, on Thursday evening. If you plan to drive to Canberra on the Friday

⁸⁷ John La Nauze was Professor of History.

⁸⁸ Geoff Bolton was later Professor of Australian Studies at University of London, Professor of History at The University of Queensland and Edith Cowan University, and Chancellor of Murdoch University.

morning it might be best if I meet you at midday in the front foyer of University House. I will book a table in the bistro there for lunch and we can eat together. If these arrangements do not suit you let me know by leaving a message at University House.

After writing to you last Sunday I went for a very pleasant stroll through Kings Park to look at the wildflowers. They were like a multi-coloured carpet and vastly superior to anything I have seen elsewhere. The weather has improved a lot now spring is here. As I write the temperature is about 25 degrees and I am wearing shorts. The flowers and weather, however, brought back my hay fever. [I suffered badly from hay fever each spring that I was in Perth.]

It was another busy week at work. I gave my first lecture on Monday afternoon on 'Concepts of Liberalism'. It seemed to go off well enough although it is always difficult to know. On Tuesday I gave the second lecture, on 'Australian Federalism', with Professor La Nauze in attendance. I spoke for about half an hour and he for about 15 minutes. He was really good. I think the students benefited from hearing him. My tutorials were related to the two lecture topics.

On Tuesday night a number of us from the Department of History took Professor La Nauze to dinner at a local restaurant. We had a very enjoyable meal. Afterwards we adjourned to Isabel Durack's⁸⁹ house in Claremont. She is the wife of Senator Peter Durack,⁹⁰ the shadow Postmaster General. Their home is beautiful. On Wednesday night I ate well again at Estie's birthday party. Her mother prepared some very tasty Chinese noodles.

This morning I went to town where I shopped. It was, probably because of the warm weather, very crowded. Tonight I am going see 'Towering Inferno' [a film].

What do you think of the federal government's handling of the Timor situation? Its lack of humanitarianism reminds of the attitude to Vietnamese refugees earlier this year. There was an excellent article on the subject by Gerald Stone in this week's Bulletin.

I got a letter from Sylvia a few days ago in which she mentioned how much she and Michael enjoyed the lunch you gave them. Before too long you will be able to establish a restaurant!

⁸⁹ Isabel Durack was Senior Lecturer in History.

⁹⁰ Peter Durack was later a non-Labor federal government minister.

Another letter this week was from the University of Queensland Press. I wrote to them last month asking about the possibilities of having my thesis published. Their reply was most encouraging, as they seem very interested. I will have to get to work ironing out the various rough edges. [This was another project that was a victim of my move to Rockhampton. I was, though, quickly losing interest in my thesis topic.]

As far as the job situation is concerned, my latest application is for a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. I would not normally have applied for it but in the present circumstances I should apply for everything in my field that is going. Macquarie University took up my references but I am not sure that will amount to anything.

You will no doubt have read about the crippling budget cuts in medical research and research activities generally. The Australian Research Grants Committee, for instance, had a 66 per cent cut. I fail to understand why the cuts are necessary.

I graduated at ANU on the late afternoon of 12 September 1975. Among those at the ceremony were my parents and Manning Clark.



**The author immediately after his ANU graduation at Canberra in September
1975**

UWA 20 September 1975

Thank you very much, once again, for making it possible for me to attend the graduation ceremony. I really did appreciate it. I trust that you got home safe and sound and the dogs were rescued from the vet in time. [My parents had two dogs, Dini and Inga.]

After I left you on Friday night I walked back to University House and went to bed not long afterwards. On Saturday morning I shopped with My-Van and Don Vandenberg. We also visited the former chef of the South Vietnamese embassy. He is soon to set up a Chinese restaurant in Canberra. We bought food from him that we had for lunch. On Saturday afternoon we visited some people in Graduate House. On Saturday evening I went to dinner at Melanie Leong's⁹¹ house in Yarralumla. It was a joint celebration for my own and Don Rowland's⁹² PhDs, and Hoi's⁹³ Master's degree. [I no longer recall and cannot locate Hoi's full name.] The food was very good indeed and I ate far too much. My-Van, who did much of the cooking, Algy, the two Dons [Rowland and Vandenberg], [Nguyen Van] Thua⁹⁴ and some other friends were among those present. We got back to University House at about midnight. On Sunday I had lunch with Sylvia and Michael at Woodstock, a pizza place in Civic. Algy, Don Vandenberg and My-Van took me to the airport. My plane left at 5.25 PM. It was a very rough flight to Sydney but smooth after then. We stopped for about half an hour in Adelaide and arrived in Perth at 10.10 PM local time. Sitting next to me on the plane was an attractive lady who told me her life story and bought me a drink. She owns sandwich shops in Perth and was in Sydney to see her boy friend. I was met at Perth airport and driven back to Currie Hall.

On Monday it was back to normal. I had a tutorial on Monday morning and lectured that afternoon. This week in my special topics we are looking at Alfred Deakin's⁹⁵ role in the federation movement and the land question in colonial politics. On Wednesday the department lunched with Professor P.H. Partridge,⁹⁶ who is heading a committee of inquiry into post-secondary education in Australia. Last night

⁹¹ Melanie Leong was a diplomat at the Malaysian embassy in Canberra.

⁹² Don Rowland received his PhD in Demography. He was later Reader in Population Studies at ANU.

⁹³ Hoi's Master's degree was in Agricultural Development Economics.

⁹⁴ Nguyen Van Thua was a Master's student in Forestry.

⁹⁵ Alfred Deakin was non-Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

⁹⁶ Percy Partridge was Professor in the Education Research Unit at ANU.

I dined with friends at El Sombrero. It was, once again, very good. This morning being Saturday I went into town. Tonight I have been asked to dinner by John Fall,⁹⁷ Currie Hall's acting Master.



Michael Louis,⁹⁸ the author and David Baker⁹⁹ at the Arts Building courtyard, UWA, in September 1975

UWA 27 September 1975

Thank you very much for the letters and photos [of my graduation]. The latter came out very well indeed. It was just as well you took them, as there was something wrong with the film in my camera that made all the pictures over exposed.

My main news is that my appointment here as Temporary Senior Tutor has been extended for another year, that is until 31 December 1976. From the beginning of next year I will also get a salary increase. It was, of course, a pleasant surprise as I was worried about my prospects for next year in view of the budget cut backs. I am very lucky to be teaching Australian history, for which there is so much student demand. Temporary tutors teaching in other fields of history will have to go as their

⁹⁷ John Fall was Senior Lecturer in Electrical Engineering. He was later Principal of Currie Hall.

⁹⁸ Michael Louis was Temporary Senior Tutor in History.

⁹⁹ David Baker was Research Fellow in History.

contracts expire. I understand that Peter Reeves had to make a particularly strong case to the university administration just to keep myself and the other tutor in the Australian field. Fortunately, I am still able to take up a permanent position elsewhere if one is offered to me. Peter assured me that the department would not try to hold me back should such an eventuality arise.

On Saturday night I had dinner at the flat of John Fall, Currie Hall's acting Master. Various people that I know were present and we had a very pleasant evening. On the Sunday I mainly read.

*For my tutorials the students discussed free, compulsory and secular education in the nineteenth century and the writing of the federal constitution. On Wednesday morning I gave a paper at a staff seminar entitled 'A Question of Conscience; Sir Littleton Groom, the Speakership and the Fall of the Bruce-Page Government'. It seemed to go over fairly well, which was pleasing as I hope to have it published. [In 1977 it appeared in *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*.¹⁰⁰] On Thursday evening I went to Winthrop Hall to watch Malcolm Fraser deliver the Robert Menzies Lecture. It was a quite competent performance but he did not say much that was new. The hall was completely packed. The audience, however, was rather unresponsive. There was no heckling or cheering and only polite clapping when he entered and left. The theme of his address was the need to cut back the public sector by eliminating wasteful and socially harmful government expenditure. This morning I shopped and bought some new clothes.*

As I am now assured of continued well-paid employment next year I am considering going overseas early in the year, perhaps to Southeast Asia. Next week I might see a travel agent.

I hope you enjoy the tulip festival [in Bowral] and that the fuel shortage [due to an industrial dispute] in your part of the country is soon over.

UWA 4 October 1975

Thank you for your letters and all your news. I hope Dad that you had a good time in New Zealand. [He was there on a business trip.] It was a shame you could not stay longer and Mum was unable to accompany you.

¹⁰⁰ vol 23, no 1, 1977.

I gave my usual lectures, one on Queensland colonial politics and the other on the Australian constitution. I had tutorials on a comparison between Henry Parkes and Charles Pearson¹⁰¹ and on the origins of the federal arbitration power.

On Thursday night I went to listen to Helen Suzman, the leader of the Progressive Party in South Africa, on 'South Africa: Today and Tomorrow'. She answered questions afterwards. Despite her reputation as a leading white South African critic of apartheid, demonstrators in the audience handed out leaflets accusing her of being a collaborator with the South African regime and interrupted her address. She struck me as a very forceful personality but perhaps rather naïve in her hope that a violent revolution could be averted in her country. I certainly hope she is right but I rather doubt it. After her talk I had supper with friends who live near the university.

Yesterday I went into town to get details about Southeast Asian trips. There are interesting package tours offered although none is particularly cheap. If I do go away it will probably be during the first few weeks of February. It will depend on whether I stay in Perth. Should I move elsewhere I might be very busy in preparing new teaching materials.

Yesterday night I went to dinner with friends at Maggies, a restaurant in Nedlands. This morning I went to the shops.

I should be able to get away from Perth in late November after I finish marking exam papers. I plan to spend most of December and January in Canberra with, of course, frequent excursions to Burradoo. The university awarded me a grant of about \$700 for research. I will do most of my work in the National Library. I was lucky to get the grant, especially as money for such purposes will be short next year. Unless the university spends its allocation for 1975 before the end of this year it cannot save any for next year.

What are your plans for Christmas? It might be nice if My-Van and Don Vandenberg can join us. They may, of course, have other plans and might not wish to be committed at this stage.

UWA 11 October 1975

¹⁰¹ Charles Pearson was a non-Labor politician in Victoria.

Thank you for your letters. It was good to see that Tulip Time was keeping you both so busy.

My latest plan is that I will leave here in the last week of November and reach Burradoo on the weekend. I have booked in University House from 1 December but will pay you regular visits and be in Burradoo for Christmas. I shall leave Canberra in late January.

Subject to confirmation, on 1 February I leave Perth on a Cathay Pacific tour of Southeast Asia for 19 days. It includes Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Nepal. Seven days are in Nepal, which seems exciting. I am going to Kathmandu, near Mount Everest, the jungles in the south of the country and other places. The cost of the whole tour, which includes travel, accommodation in first class hotels and breakfasts, is about \$1000. The Cathay Pacific arrangements appealed to me because they do not over organise one.

This week, being the last of the term, the students were really jittery about the forthcoming exams. Staff members, on the other hand, are very happy! On Friday a number of us from the department had celebratory drinks at the staff club. I gave lectures on the New Liberalism and the federation referendums of 1898-1900 and tutorial discussions were on related topics. This weekend the students have 'take home' exams on the special topics.

On Wednesday the department had a special lunch for Josh Reynolds, who has lectured here since the early 1930s on a part-time basis as well as being, until a few years ago, Warden of St George's College [a residential college affiliated with UWA]. Among his past students are not only current members of the department but also Bob Hawke¹⁰² and Sir Paul Hasluck.¹⁰³ [From time to time I had lunch at the staff club with Josh, Ernie Jones and Michael Louis.]

Last night Currie Hall had its end of term dinner dance. It was quite a pleasant occasion despite a brief interruption when a group of streakers invaded it. This morning I shopped.

I am glad you enjoyed your time in New Zealand Dad. Next year you and Mum should both go there.

¹⁰² Bob Hawke was President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and later Prime Minister of Australia.

¹⁰³ Sir Paul Hasluck was a non-Labor federal government minister and Governor General of Australia.

UWA 18 October 1975

Thank you for your letters. Tulip Time seems to be keeping you fairly active. You will probably be relieved in a way when it is all over and you are able to move around Bowral without getting caught up in traffic jams.

Events in Canberra certainly took a dramatic turn over the last week. [The federal Opposition decided to block the government's supply legislation in the Senate.] I feel the Opposition acted foolishly in yet again using the Senate improperly. I hoped that Fraser would have learned from Snedden's mistake last year but quite obviously he has not. Whitlam will not agree with an election because he fears he will lose but this does not deny the principle that a government should be allowed to run its full term unless defeated in the lower house. The Opposition was able to defer the budget because of Bjelke-Petersen's¹⁰⁴ decision not to replace a dead Labor Senator with another Labor person. My own sentiments on this are much the same as those of Steele Hall [of the Liberal Movement],¹⁰⁵ who I saw interviewed on TV last week. I want to see the Liberals in power again but it is wrong that they should attempt to grab power in this fashion. If there is an election soon I will have to vote Labor, not because I approve of the government but because of the need to stop what could become a dangerous political precedent.

Compared with the tumultuous goings on in Canberra, my own week was fairly quiet. On Saturday night I went to the Stuarts' house in Nedlands for a wine and cheese evening. I was the only native born Australian there. The others were American, British and Canadian. On Sunday I mainly read until the evening when I went to dinner at Estie's family's house in Osborne Park. At the university I marked take home exam papers and collated students' marks. On Tuesday night I went to Sue Graham-Taylor's¹⁰⁶ interesting seminar on the origins of the Ord River irrigation scheme. Last night I attended an ANU convocation dinner. Manning Clark was the speaker. He spoke well but on an odd topic, arguing that there were no longer any great teachers. Many people were there. This morning, as usual, I went shopping in town. Now that the students are doing exams I hope to write more. I was pleased

¹⁰⁴ Joh, later Sir Joh, Bjelke-Petersen was non-Labor Premier of Queensland.

¹⁰⁵ Steele Hall, a former non-Labor Premier of South Australia, was a Senator.

¹⁰⁶ Sue Graham-Taylor was a PhD student in History at Murdoch University. She was later a museum curator.

when The Australian Journal of Politics and History accepted the article I submitted to it.

I hope that the political crisis will be sorted out soon.

UWA 24 October 1975

Thank you for your letters and the copies of The World Today Dad. I wrote to Mr Church¹⁰⁷ thanking him as well. [My father's friend Fred Church regularly sent me copies of The World Today magazine once he finished reading them.] I was sorry to learn that Uncle David¹⁰⁸ is still not too well. I hope he improves soon.

The political crisis is no nearer solution. I wish Fraser would back down before the potentially disastrous consequences of his actions are felt. If he does so it will mean a loss of face but he will have another year in which to prepare for a poll. It is the Liberals' fault that there is not an election soon. If there had not been the double dissolution last year the government would be facing the people very soon. I do not believe that Whitlam is sincere in his sudden attachment to the principle that the Senate should not block money bills but on this occasion he is right whatever his motives may be. The best thing that could happen from Fraser's point of view is for a few Liberal Senators to abstain.

With the students busy studying and the exams not until next week it has been quiet at the university. Last Sunday I went swimming with friends. The weather and water were quite warm. On Sunday night I watched an exciting film on television called 'Ice Station Zebra'. On Tuesday the department entertained Manning Clark for lunch. Afterwards Manning and I went to the museum in Fremantle. I had not been there before and found it very interesting. Among the exhibits are relics from Dutch wrecks on the Western Australian coast, including the gruesome skeleton of a man killed in a mutiny. On Tuesday night I went to Lenore Layman's seminar on Western Australia's electoral history since 1945. Yesterday the Bank of New South Wales confirmed my travel arrangements. I suppose I will also have to arrange for visas, injections etc. For most of the week I wrote an article about the Bruce government's attempt in 1925 to deport two trade union leaders.

¹⁰⁷ Fred Church was a businessman in Sydney.

¹⁰⁸ David Wood, the husband of my father's sister Marion, was a senior administrator at The University of Sydney.

The weather in Perth is becoming steadily hotter. We are still receiving rain but the dry season is almost here. My friend Rob Stuart, who arrived from Canada in May, is already complaining about the heat. I fear that he has a real shock ahead. It is also, unfortunately for me, hay fever season again.

UWA 31 October 1975

Thank you so much for your letters. I was sorry to learn of your illness Mum but am glad that you are now on the mend. I was pleased to read that Uncle David is better now. I got a letter (complete with illustrations) from Tom this week. His seems very busy indeed with his painting activities.

The university was again very quiet over the last week. Exams are now in full swing. My first year students did their paper today while my third year people had theirs on Wednesday. Yesterday and today I have been busy marking. I should be finished this by early next week. On Wednesday morning the Vice Chancellor visited our department. He stayed for about an hour while we had tea and biscuits. He answered our various questions.

There is now a good chance that I will be a Temporary Lecturer next year, running the third year course on twentieth century Australia. One of the permanent lecturers in Australian history, Tom Stannage, will be on leave for the whole year to research a history of Perth. The Perth City Council is paying his salary. Peter Reeves has recommended to the administration that a Temporary Senior Tutor replaces him and that Marian Aveling and I are Temporary Lecturers for six months each. My lectureship would be for the first half of the year. It will be very valuable experience for me. The only drawback is that it will cut into the research I had hoped to complete over the long vacation, as I will have lectures to prepare then. I will, though, still be in your part of the world for most of December and January.

Last Saturday I spent the morning in town. In the afternoon I surfed at Cottesloe Beach. The water was cool but bearable. On Sunday I mainly read and listened to records.

There is not much more I can say on the political crisis other than I wish it would end soon. Isabel Durack, whose husband Peter is a Liberal Senator and a shadow minister, says that 'madmen' are in control of the Liberal Party. I was interested in the results of the Sydney Morning Herald poll on the crisis. There are obviously many people who share our feelings about it.

I hope Mum that your recovery is complete by the time you receive this letter.

UWA 9 November 1975

Thank you both for your letters. I am glad that you seem to be much better now Mum. I hope that you are not suffering from the very heavy rain in much of eastern Australia. The flooding of the Murray is particularly bad. The weather here in Perth over the past week has been glorious – blue skies and temperatures of up to about 27 degrees.

Last Sunday I drove to York, a town about 100 kilometres from Perth. It is Western Australia's oldest inland settlement with fine examples of colonial architecture. I took photos there that that I will show you in a few weeks. The road to York passes through picturesque country in the Darling Range and Avon Valley.

I continued marking third year exam papers for part of the week. Most were reasonable enough and I only failed one of them. Bad students usually fall by the way in first and second years.

On Friday evening I went to a Chinese banquet organised by Liu Yat-wing. It was excellent. We ate, among other things, iron grilled chicken, squid, pork, broccoli, prawns and rice.

Yesterday morning I went to the city. All the stores are now being decorated for Christmas. Santa Claus travelled around the streets in a vintage car. Yesterday afternoon I surfed at Cottesloe. A strong breeze created quite large waves. Even though the water was warm surprisingly few other people were swimming there.



York Town Hall in November 1975

UWA Undated [probably 15 November 1975]

Thank you both for your letters and also for the telephone call.

It was certainly a dramatic week. [On 11 November 1975 the Governor General, Sir John Kerr, dismissed the Whitlam government and commissioned Malcolm Fraser to form a caretaker administration to hold office until a federal election in December.] It must have reminded you Dad of the situation in 1932 when Sir Philip Game¹⁰⁹ dismissed Jack Lang as Premier of New South Wales and the very bitter, sometimes violent, campaign that followed. I certainly hope that we don't have that situation repeated. Despite what the politicians are saying, there has already been some political violence in Australia. Examples include Fenian activities during the nineteenth century, the big 1903 railway strike in Victoria, the conscription crisis during the First World War and various coal miners' strikes. I don't think our political system is in peril but there may be some ugly incidents ahead. Although, as I said on the phone, I believe that Kerr acted improperly, the Liberals placed him in a most unenviable situation. I hope it does not happen but it would be poetic justice for Fraser if the Liberals win control of the House of Representatives yet face a hostile Senate. I will vote Labor because of what has happened although without much enthusiasm. There is talk of the Liberal Movement standing candidates in Western Australia. Should this occur I would vote for them and give Labor my second preference. Steele Hall's voice has been the sanest one throughout the entire crisis.

I cannot predict the election outcome. Rallies and demonstrations in favour of Labor have certainly been well attended but this may mean little. Whitlam would do well to read the sections concerning the 1932 campaign in Jack Lang's autobiography. You might be interested if I quote a couple of paragraphs from it.

'The greatest meeting of all was a Labor demonstration held in Moore Park on Sunday June 6th. It started with a procession from Central Square and brought people in thousands from the suburbs and from the country. This was the biggest political meeting ever held in Australia. Police estimates of the size of the crowd ranged from 250,000 to 400,000. The procession started arriving in the park before 3 p.m. and continued arriving until it closed at 5 p.m. The last contingent to arrive was from Bankstown electorate headed by the Minister for Transport, James McGirr, which did not reach the park until after the meeting had closed down.

¹⁰⁹ Sir Philip Game was Governor of New South Wales.

As a climax to the meeting those in attendance were asked to raise their right hand if they intended to vote Labor the following Saturday. A forest of hands shot up in the air. One cynic later said that if they had all kept their promise Labor “would have won by a street”. But when the figures were hoisted, Labor’s faith in political meetings was just about destroyed for all time.’

My own activities over the past week were very dull in comparison with those in Canberra. On Tuesday afternoon I joined some of my third year students who asked me to go to the pub with them to celebrate the end of their exams. Afterwards we all went to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. On Wednesday all of us involved in teaching the first year Australian history course had a full day meeting where we went through the results of about 200 students and decided their grades. Yesterday John Watson,¹¹⁰ a soil scientist at the university, contacted me about the centenary celebrations next year of a Fenian escape from Fremantle. Re-enactments are being held. The organisers also plan to produce a book. He asked me if I was interested in writing an article in it on Irish nationalism. I said that probably would be.

Currie Hall is now virtually deserted. Only about 40 inhabitants remain, most being from interstate and overseas. I will also be gone in a couple of weeks.

UWA 21 November 1975

Many thanks for your letters. I was glad Mum that your dinner party was so successful and you enjoyed yourself in Sydney. I was, of course, interested in your views on the political situation Dad but I feel you are wrong on this occasion. [My father approved of the federal government’s dismissal and intended to vote Liberal.] If there is a threat to democracy it comes from the non-Labor parties. They have shown twice over the past three years that they are not prepared to accept the people’s verdict. They recently achieved power through the use of an undemocratic majority in the Senate and the Governor General’s actions. I agree with many of your criticisms of the Labor government yet far more than the performance of individual ministers and the handling of the economy are now at stake. If the Liberals win this election it means a precedent being established whereby Governors General can dismiss ministries and the accident of a Senator’s death can force a government to the polls.

¹¹⁰ John Watson had a research position in the Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.

During the long period of Menzies'¹¹¹ rule there were many Australians who had bitter feelings about him. They were, however, never able to resort to the steps recently taken by the non-Labor parties. True conservatives in this election should vote Labor. I am not a socialist and disagree with much of what the present government has done but I want to preserve the system we have that Fraser and his followers seem so intent on subverting. I apologise for my long tirade but I felt Dad that your own carefully considered and thoughtful statement deserved a reply. These are indeed troubled times. I earnestly hope that whatever the election result our old pattern of stability is restored.

I have now been appointed Temporary Lecturer from next January. I will, as previously mentioned, run a third year course on twentieth century Australia. I am very busy preparing reading lists, tutorial guides etc. The appointment means a salary increase to \$12,063 a year.

Last Saturday night Estie and I went to a barbecue organised by Kerry Hutchinson,¹¹² one of my former third year students, and her husband Doug, a dentist. They live in a very pleasant house at Kalamunda, a beautiful area in the Darling Range. A number of my former students and the Stoddarts were there. On Sunday I went to lunch with friends at a very good Chinese restaurant. The remainder of the week was fairly quiet, partly because of a petrol tanker drivers' strike that has only just ended. I hardly used my car because I was worried I may not be able to leave here next week. As a result, I still have an almost full tank and a jerry can full of petrol. Today I drove Ernie Jones to the airport. He is, lucky man, going on a holiday to Italy.

I plan to leave Perth very early on the morning of Saturday 29 November. All going well, I will arrive at Burradoo late on the night of Monday 1 December. If I do not make it by then I will ring you up. I shall have one passenger with me. She is Liz Casey,¹¹³ an Honours student in my department. I will probably drop her off in Canberra before I go to Burradoo. If, however, she feels like coming on, I will ask her to do so and it might be a good idea if you have a spare bed prepared just in case.

I look forward to seeing you all again.

¹¹¹ Sir Robert Menzies was non-Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

¹¹² Kerry Hutchinson was a BA student. She was later a schoolteacher and had senior positions in international higher education.

¹¹³ Liz Casey was later a schoolteacher.

The week before departing was busy. My diary shows that I attended meetings for the first and third year Australian history courses, had dinner with Estie, went to a meal at Marian Aveling's home and attended a dissertation examiners' meeting.

My journey across the continent went smoothly. Liz was a most agreeable travelling companion. We had a pleasant lunch in Kalgoorlie at the home of her friend Wendy Tonkin,¹¹⁴ another History student. Our first night was at a motel on the Nullarbor Plain (I no longer recall exactly where) and our second at one in Port Augusta. I delivered Liz to the Canberra home of the Labor Western Australian federal politician Kim Beazley,¹¹⁵ the father of her friend and fellow History Honours student Merrilyn.¹¹⁶ Kim looked completely worn out, commenting that the election campaign was enormously exhausting. I reached Burradoo later that evening.



Liz Casey with the author's vehicle near the Western Australia-South Australia border in November 1975

Until late January 1976 I was based in Canberra, mainly working at the National Library. I enjoyed seeing old friends and making regular visits to my parents in Burradoo. Our family Christmas there was enjoyable. I was disappointed but not ultimately surprised by the federal election result that saw Labor badly defeated.

¹¹⁴ Wendy Tonkin was a BA student. As Wendy Duncan, she was later a non-Labor member of the Western Australian parliament.

¹¹⁵ Kim Beazley was a Labor federal government minister.

¹¹⁶ Merrilyn Beazley as Merrilyn Wasson later had administrative and academic positions at ANU and Charles Darwin University.

1976

UWA 23 January 1976

It was so very nice to be with you both last weekend. I was, of course, sorry to leave. I don't know whether you heard me go away on Monday morning. I left the house at about 4.30 AM. Only Dini seemed aware of my departure.

I reached Canberra at about 6.30 AM, where I picked up my passenger Nop Monkoltananont.¹¹⁷ We then drove north to Yass and along the Hume Highway. We breakfasted at a pretty spot on the Murrumbidgee River not far from Gundagai. The weather quickly became very hot. We had lunch at Hay and drove to South Australia via Mildura. We had enormous difficulty that night in finding accommodation. Every hotel and motel between Renmark and the Barossa Valley was booked up. This was, we were told, because of an expected earthquake and tidal wave in Adelaide. [The forecast, started by a clairvoyant, caused widespread panic. The earthquake and tidal wave never eventuated.] In the end we slept in a caravan at Lyndoch. We were lucky to find anything at all.

On the next morning we bypassed Adelaide through Salisbury before driving north to Port Augusta via Port Pirie. We had a good lunch of fresh fish at Port Augusta. In the afternoon we continued along the Eyre Highway as far as Nundroo, about three hundred kilometres west of Ceduna. That evening we stayed in an excellent motel.

On Wednesday we were up bright and early. We were soon on the dirt section of the road. We breakfasted at a good restaurant on the border and then pressed on again. After a long day's drive, about 15 hours in all, we stopped that night at a motel in Kalgoorlie.

Yesterday's drive was quite short compared with the previous three days. We stopped for a while in Coolgardie, a now virtually deserted ghost town, where Nop took many pictures. Breakfast was at Southern Cross. We then drove through the wheat growing areas. We arrived at Currie Hall at about 1.30 PM. I booked Nop into a room there and also showed her around the university. In the afternoon I went to my

¹¹⁷ Nop Monkoltananont was a Master's student (I no longer recall the field) at University House. She later married Don Vandenberg.

office to discover a huge pile of mail, including many bills. It was good to see people again and catch up with their news.

This morning I took my car to the car wash. It was, as you can imagine, filthy. Even after going through the wash twice it was not completely clean. I also bought another hubcap. [My car lost hubcaps far too frequently.] Since then I have mainly worked in my office. Tomorrow I plan to show Nop some of the sights. It is extremely hot at the moment, about 39 degrees. I hope it cools down before tomorrow.



Nop Monkoltananont at Mildura in January 1976

UWA 30 January 1976

Thank you both for your letters. I was sorry to learn about Grandpa.¹¹⁸ [My grandfather went to hospital after a bad fall while staying with my parents.] I hope he is well and out of hospital before too long. Thank you also for the cutting about the lectureship in Adelaide. I shall apply for it but it is difficult to know what my chances are.

I have been busy in the department since I last wrote. I wrote my article on Irish nationalism [it appeared later in the year¹¹⁹], ordered books for the library and

¹¹⁸ My grandfather David Carment was a retired naval architect.

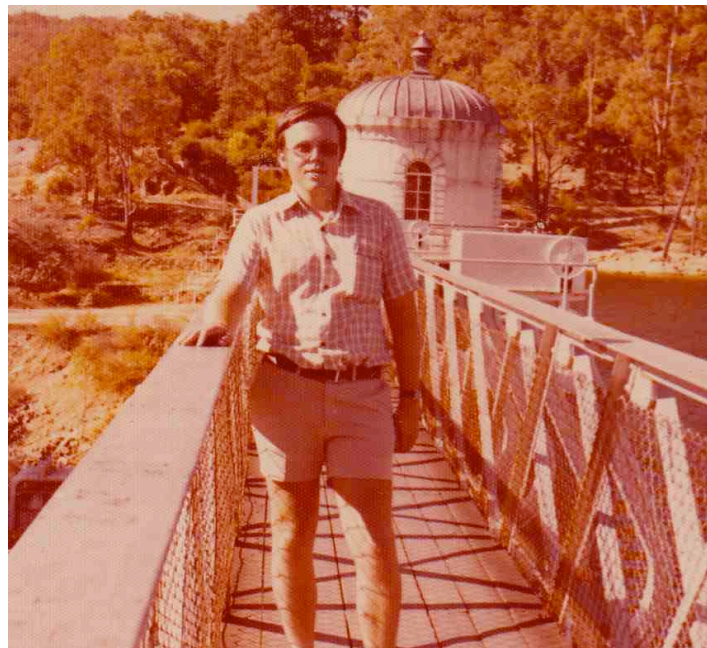
¹¹⁹ 'The Origins of Nineteenth Century Irish Nationalism: Myths and Reality', in John Watson (ed), *100 Years Ago: A Special Collection of Papers on the Background and Significance of the Fenian Escape from Fremantle Western Australia, 1876*, Perth, 1976.

had articles xeroxed [copied] for my course. I also prepared an information sheet and essay topics for external students.

I have also made all the final preparations for my trip. I went to the travel agent on Wednesday and collected my passport, tickets, vouchers and a host of pamphlets. I am taking \$1000 worth of travellers' cheques although I hope I will not be spending that much. On the same day I bought myself a new suitcase. I hope that it is strong enough for the journey. I purchased a new camera as well, one of the superior instamatics with an electric eye. It cost \$107, so I hope it produces decent photos.

Last Saturday I showed Nop some of the sights of Perth. We drove to Fremantle via Dalkeith and Peppermint Grove and visited the excellent maritime museum. We then went to Rockingham where we lunched besides the beach. In the afternoon we travelled north as far as Yanchep and visited Mundaring Weir. That night we had dinner at the Kings Park Restaurant.

A couple of days ago there were gale force winds here. They produced very high tides on the river. The water came right up to the park beside the university and was only a few inches below El Sombrero, where I ate with you last year. Otherwise the weather has remained very hot. I hope the bad weather in your part of the world has now improved.



The author at Mundaring Weir in January 1976

My trip went well. I enjoyed all the places I visited. Nepal was especially fascinating. The only problem occurred at the end when an air traffic controllers' strike in Australia meant that my arrival home was delayed by a few days.



The author at Songboche, Nepal in February 1976

UWA, 27 February 1976

Thanks so much for your two phone calls. It was nice to hear your voices again and especially that you plan a world trip. Your itinerary seems most interesting.

I arrived back in Perth at 3.00 on Sunday morning and took a taxi to Currie Hall. Because of the hot and sticky weather and the fact that for the first time in three weeks I was in a bedroom without air conditioning I found it very difficult to get any sleep. I spent most of Sunday moving possessions to my new rooms at Currie Hall. [During 1976 I was a Resident Tutor at the Hall, which meant that I had a two- room apartment.] I was so exhausted on Sunday night that I slept far more easily.

I worked in the department every day during the week. I distributed material for external students, checked that books were in the library etc. Yesterday night I

went to a party in the department for third year Honours students, many of whom I will teach. I also attended a couple of meetings associated with my tutoring at Currie Hall. As well as taking tutorials in History and Politics, I am there to help people with their personal problems and have a master key for those who lock themselves out of their rooms. [I also needed it quite often to get access to the switchboard on my floor and restore power to rooms after students overloaded the power points.] Tomorrow I have some shopping to do. Over the weekend I will revise an article [‘Sir Littleton Groom and the Deportation Crisis of 1925: A Study of Non-Labor Response to Trade Union Militancy’] that Labour History accepted for publication. The editor recommended some small additions. [The article appeared in 1977.¹²⁰]

I hope your weather is better than ours. It is very hot and a cyclone is heading towards the Western Australian coast.

UWA 6 March 1975

Thank you both for your letters. Thanks also for the copies of my own letters from overseas, which provide a handy diary of my trip. I am sorry that the bad weather continues in your part of the country. The weather here has improved greatly since I last wrote. Autumn at last is on the way.

Last Saturday I shopped. I bought a few odds and ends for my rooms. On Sunday I worked on my article.

During the week I had a constant stream of students seeing me about my course. I also gave the introductory lectures on Wednesday and Friday. On Monday night I joined other Currie Hall tutors at a get together. We had a formal meeting at lunchtime on Tuesday. On Tuesday and Thursday nights I invited students living on my floor to drinks in my rooms. I joined students from the Hall on a river cruise on Wednesday night. My tutorials at both the university and the Hall start next week. At Wednesday lunchtime to History department got together to welcome back Bert Hallam and three other staff members who had just returned from overseas sabbatical leave. [They included Trish Crawford¹²¹ and Frank Broeze,¹²² both stimulating and supportive colleagues.]

¹²⁰ No 32, 1977.

¹²¹ Trish Crawford was Lecturer in History. She was later Professor of History.

¹²² Frank Broeze was Lecturer in History. He was later Professor of History.

I have just written to Ian Hamill in London telling him that you are there in April. If you have time I would be grateful if you can get in touch with him. He and Mike Perry, who you met a few Easters ago, are sharing a house. I got a letter from My-Van a few days ago. She says she will ask you to get in touch with her Fred. You are now, no doubt, looking forward to going.

UWA 13 March 1976

Thank you both for your letters. It is good that the arrangements for your trip are proceeding well.

I was flat out during the week preparing lectures and tutorials. I met all my tutorial groups. With the first year people I discussed 'Why study Australian history?' I also showed them around the library. Few have much idea of how a university library works. With the third year people I discussed the Fusion of the non-Labor parties in 1909. For my lectures on Wednesday and Friday I talked about Australian federalism and economic development in Australia between 1901 and 1939. I also had my first tutorial at Currie Hall – all women. On Tuesday morning I attended a Currie Hall tutors' meeting. On Wednesday morning there was a departmental staff meeting. I am going back over all the lecture notes I prepared in Canberra to make additions and improvements.

There was little time for social activities. I did, however, go to drinks on Sunday night and this morning played an enjoyable but exhausting game of tennis.

UWA 20 March 1976

Thank you for your letters. Your holiday plans are now well advanced. I look forward to seeing you here in a few weeks' time. [My parents were stopping in Perth for a few days before flying to Singapore.]

After writing to you last Saturday I watched television that night. On Sunday morning I mainly read before going for a short drive. In the afternoon I worked in my office.

I had more teaching than usual this week as Marian Aveling was in hospital and I took a couple of her tutorials. On Monday night I went to Brian de Garis's seminar on the emergence of political parties in Western Australia. On Wednesday I went to another seminar by Frank Broeze on the Dutch tea trade during the nineteenth century. My lectures during the week dealt with economic development

since 1939 and private economic power and the role of the state. The first year tutorials were on Aboriginal prehistory, with Geoffrey Blainey's *Triumph of the Nomads* as basic reading. The third year students discussed the conscription crisis during the First World War. This morning I shopped in town.

I sent you a letter from John Courtney that I hope you received. He wrote to me as well, describing his adventurous journey to Egypt via Syria, Turkey and Greece. I also received a letter and a wedding invitation from Sylvia Thomm. She and her Michael are being married in a Quaker ceremony in Canberra on 24 April.

I imagine you are watching the events in Canberra with interest. I cannot understand why the ALP wants to keep Whitlam on. Perhaps it is doing so in a fit of pique against Rupert Murdoch.¹²³

UWA 27 March 1976

I don't suppose this letter will reach you until the present airlines strike is over, which does not look like being for a while yet. I certainly hope it is finished by the time you set off in a couple of weeks. You will unfortunately be arriving here in the middle of one of my tutorials. I will meet you at your hotel.

I did not know until I got your letter that Ann now has a job. Is it temporary or permanent? It should ease her financial situation. I was also pleased to hear about [my cousin] Di's,¹²⁴ article. I will try to read it. I am sorry that Grandpa continues to keep you all busy. But from what you said he seems to have improved somewhat.

On Sunday I mainly prepared for tutorials. During the week I took third year tutorials on the emergence of the Country Party and third year ones on the 'cultural baggage' of the first British immigrants. On Wednesday I lectured on urbanisation and on Friday Brian de Garis gave a lecture for me on literature and art. On Monday night I attended a seminar organised for postgraduate students. On Thursday evening I went to another seminar, this time by Eric Stokes, the Professor of Commonwealth History at [University of] Cambridge. He spoke most impressively on [the author Rudyard] 'Kipling's Imperialism'. Afterwards I went to a local pancake restaurant with a couple of friends. I have just finished marking a large pile of first year essays

¹²³ Rupert Murdoch was a media proprietor.

¹²⁴ Di Wood Conroy was an archaeologist and artist. She was later Professor of Visual Arts at University of Wollongong.

of very mixed quality. The third year essays so far have been quite reasonable. This morning I played tennis, shopped and had lunch in a Chinese restaurant.

There are no letters for the period between 27 March and 23 April. At least one appears not to have been not received or kept. During the last week of March and the first week of April activities recorded in my diary included the usual classes and attendance at a couple of seminars. My parents stayed in Perth en route to Singapore from 8 to 10 April. We had lunch at El Sombrero and I also took them to York. I joined Estie for dinner on the evening of 10 April. Brian Stoddart lectured to my third year group on the history of sport on 14 April. That night I had dinner at the home of Chris¹²⁵ and John Weckert.¹²⁶ Chris was one of my third year students. Her husband John was Temporary Senior Tutor in Philosophy.



Maxwell and Diana Carment at York in April 1976

UWA 23 April 1976

Thank you so much for the letters from Singapore. You had an exciting though rather hectic time there. Your visit to Malacca was interesting. The only part of Malaysia I

¹²⁵ Chris Weckert was later Lecturer in Education at The University of Newcastle.

¹²⁶ John Weckert was later Professor of Computer Ethics at Charles Sturt University.

saw was the southern part of Johore. I would have liked to go further north. I look forward to learning about your further adventures.

I last wrote to you, I think, on the Thursday before Easter. [This letter was either not received or not kept.] On Good Friday morning I went to a service at the very old Presbyterian church in Cottesloe. The minister had a broad Scots accent. His sermon was very much of the 'fire and brimstone' variety. Afterwards I went back to Currie Hall, where I spent the remainder of the day reading for tutorials. The first year tutorials were on the role of some of Western Australia's founding families. The Swan River Colony was a haven for gentry families who were afraid of losing social status if they stayed in Britain. The Bussell family, after which Busselton was named, comprised children of an English clergyman who were having financial difficulties. On Friday night I went to dinner at the home of Phyllis Langley, the departmental secretary. She and her husband [whose name I no longer recall] are Anglo-Burmese. They have lived in Australia for about 10 years. We had a marvellous meal. Afterwards my colleague Judith Woodward¹²⁷ showed fascinating slides of her recent trip though South America. I had no idea how beautiful it is. I would now like to go there. I played a bad game of tennis on Saturday morning. I mainly read in the afternoon. On Saturday night I went to a concert celebrating the Fenian escape from Fremantle a hundred years ago. It mainly consisted of folk singing, which was very well done. Sunday and Monday were both spent quietly. Currie Hall was peaceful, as many people were away.

On Wednesday I lectured on the Aborigines. I thought I was sympathetic to them but after the lecture a student criticised me for failing to emphasise that racism was the most important element in Australian history. We had an interesting discussion on the issue. The third year tutorials were on Egon Kisch. On Wednesday morning Brian de Garis gave an excellent seminar on the history of the Department of History.

Newspaper stories during the week have centred on the end (finally) of the wool handlers' strike, the federal government's attempts to reduce wage indexation hearings to six monthly intervals and the robbery of almost \$6 million from a group of Melbourne bookmakers.

¹²⁷ Judith Woodward was Senior Tutor in History. She was later Lecturer in History.

UWA 30 April 1976

Thank you both for your letters. You certainly had an enjoyable time in Greece and London. I trust that your stay in Scotland is equally enjoyable.

On Saturday afternoon I shopped in town. I mainly read in the afternoon. On Saturday evening I watched a further episode of 'War and Peace' on TV. On Sunday morning I played tennis. I worked in my office that afternoon. On Sunday evening I went to see a couple of films shown by the International Film Theatre or IFT. This is a club of filmgoers. There are 30 film showings each year. For these members pay \$16, which is excellent value. The range of films is very good. I am now a member.

My tutorials this week discussed black-white relations in colonial Australia and the suppression of the Australia First Movement during the Second World War. My Wednesday lecture was about migrants. On Monday night I went to Margaret Brown's¹²⁸ most interesting seminar about peace movements in Western Australia during the 1920s and 1930s. On Wednesday morning there was an unpleasant staff meeting about proposed new courses. The general idea was to increase the teaching of modern European history. Les Marchant, whose field is China, refused to go along with this unless he was given another course of his own. He went on and on and when almost everyone present voted against him he stalked angrily out of the room. Yesterday we had a more pleasant get together to celebrate Brian Stoddart getting his PhD. Last night I had a meal with Manning Clark. He was passing through Perth after spending a few weeks in the state's northwest. He visited little known places and thoroughly enjoyed himself. Tonight I dine at Judith Woodward's home.

There is no really dramatic news from Australia to report. The New South Wales elections are tomorrow. Most observers predict a very close result. You will be pleased that Vietnamese students in Australia are being granted permanent resident status if they want it. Those on Colombo Plan scholarships will have, however, to give up their awards and instead receive tertiary allowances.

UWA 6 May 1976

Many thanks for your letters from Scotland. They made me very envious. The distances you covered impressed me.

¹²⁸ Margaret Brown was an MA student.

You asked in one letter about the New South Wales election result. I wish I could give a definite answer but it is still not certain who has won. The past day's counting gives Labor a slight edge. Labor took the seat of Ashfield from the Liberals and also looks like winning Blue Mountains and Monaro. The key seat seems to be Gosford, which Labor currently looks like gaining with a very small majority. Should that occur Labor and the coalition will have 49 seats each with the balance of power being held by the independent from South Coast. He has said that he will accept the Labor leader Neville Wran's¹²⁹ offer of the Speakership and use his casting vote to keep a Labor government in office. The other doubtful electorates are Casino, which Labor will probably retain, and Hurstville, which the Liberals may hang on to by the skin of their teeth. Wran's tactic of concentrating on parish-pump issues was most successful. The result points to an increasingly large number of swinging voters. I doubt that much significance can be attached to the result as far as federal politics are concerned. It should, though, indicate to the national government that its huge majority could entirely disappear at the next election unless it performs well.

On Friday night I had a pleasant meal at Judith Woodward's flat. Also present were Phyllis Langley and her husband. I shopped on Saturday morning and read in the afternoon. On Saturday evening I watched the live telecast of the English FA [Football Association] cup final. It was most exciting. I was pleased that Southampton, the underdog, won. I mainly worked on Sunday. On Sunday night I went to the IFT and watched Orson Welles's 'Chimes at Midnight', an adaptation of 'Henry IV'.

Tutorials were on colonial land policy and the 1949 federal election. I lectured on Australian foreign policy. There was another staff meeting on Wednesday. It was, thank goodness, far less acrimonious than the last one. On Tuesday night I attended a graduation ceremony at Winthrop Hall to see some of my former students receive their degrees. I was part of the academic procession and sat on the stage. I dressed in my newly acquired ANU robes. Tomorrow is the last day of term. I shall use the vacation to catch up on things.

I hope you enjoy Sweden.

UWA 14 May 1976

¹²⁹ Neville Wran was Labor Premier of New South Wales.

Thanks again for all your letters. Oslo is clearly a fascinating place to visit, especially the maritime museum. You must be feeling quite sad now that your trip is coming to an end.

The New South Wales election is, at last, decided. Your new Premier is Neville Wran. Sir Eric Willis, the former Premier, is Leader of the Opposition. My analysis of last week was fairly correct. Labor will not, however, need to govern with an independent's support as it managed to win Hurstville by a handful of votes. Wran's cabinet is being elected today. He has already announced that he hopes to hand over the state's country rail services to the Commonwealth, something that will affect you. The final gains and losses were –

*Liberal to Labor: Ashfield, Blue Mountains, Gosford, Hurstville, Monaro
Democratic Labor Party to Liberal: Gordon [The Liberal candidate failed to nominate on time.]*

The vacation has begun and the campus is much quieter. On Saturday night I had dinner with friends at an Indian restaurant. The food was quite good and not too hot. We then went on to the Hole in the Wall theatre at Leederville to see a play called 'The Architect and the Emperor of Abyssinia'. It was an unusual performance in which the two actors spent most of their time in long underpants and braces. I mainly worked on Sunday. That night I went to the IFT to see 'Zabriskie Point'. The film dealt with the student troubles in the United States during the late 1960s. The photography was excellent but the story was rather poor.

I spent most of the week preparing reading lists for my first year special topics next term. I made many trips to the library. On Tuesday night I went to dinner with some people from Currie Hall at an excellent French restaurant in Mosman Park, 'The Peppercorn'. I had beautiful coq au vin. Tomorrow night I go to the Duracks for dinner so I had better be on my best behaviour. I have picked up a nasty cold and I am not feeling too good at present. I plan to go to bed early this evening in the hope of shaking it off.

Newspaper stories for the work have been about possible federal government spending cuts and the introduction of tax indexation. The Arbitration Commission finished its hearings on wage indexation and has reserved its judgement until next week.

I hope you have a good flight home.

UWA 21 May 1976

I hope you had a good flight from Hong Kong and were not too tired at the end of it. I trust also that everything was well looked after at Burradoo. Although you enjoyed the trip it must still be rather nice to be back home again, especially when you have so much news for your various friends.

The main news at present, which you might have already caught up on, concerns [federal Treasurer] Lynch's¹³⁰ 'mini budget' last night. It involved major cuts in government spending, near total tax indexation and a complex system of charging for Medibank. Education, fortunately, was spared from the axe. I found the exercise rather puzzling. Because of the Medibank charges most people will not benefit from the new tax system. There are cuts to worthwhile government activities. The ABC was treated savagely. I cannot see any real benefit from this assault on the public sector. Unemployment will rise and I am not sure that inflation will be slowed.

On Saturday morning I shopped. That night I had dinner at the home of Peter and Isabel Durack. They have a lovely old house in Claremont. The food was excellent and the company was enjoyable. On Sunday evening I saw a good Russian film at the IFT. It was, thank goodness, not Communist propaganda. On Tuesday night I went with a group of people from Currie Hall to see 'Mahogany', a film about a black model who shoots to international fame. It was most entertaining. I recommend that you see it if you can. On Wednesday night I dined with Chris and John Weckert. Once again, I ate very well. Tomorrow night I got to a party given by Brian Stoddart. Outside social activities I have been writing lectures. There is only one more to prepare.

I received a letter from My-Van a couple of days ago. She seems pleased that you rang Fred. She has just completed her thesis and put it in for printing. There are now, as I mentioned in an earlier letter, no problems for Vietnamese students who wish to become permanent residents.

UWA 28 May 1976

Thanks so very much for the parcel of gifts that arrived here this morning. It was very kind of you. I shall certainly make good use of all the things you sent me. Thanks also Mum for the phone call. It was good to hear your voice again.

¹³⁰ Philip, later Sir Philip, Lynch was a non-Labor federal government minister.

On Saturday morning I went shopping. In the afternoon I went to the Perry Lakes Stadium where I watched the Fijian rugby team defeat the Western Australian side 48-3. It was disappointing that the game was such a walkover but the Fijians put on a marvellous display of fast running and passing. That evening I went to an enjoyable party at the Stoddarts' home. On Sunday I went for an afternoon drive in the country north of Perth. That night I had dinner at the home of Marian and Harry Aveling.¹³¹ Harry is a lecturer at Murdoch University who has translated many Indonesian novels and poems into English.

I spent most of the week finalising lectures and reading for tutorials. Last night the department had a dinner for Professor John Poynter, a historian who is Deputy Vice Chancellor of The University of Melbourne. It was a lively evening. I did not get home until after midnight.

I hope there is not too much to do this weekend as I feel like a short break before the term begins on Monday.

The weather here is still unusually warm. The farmers are worried that there has been so little rain so far. It is, I suppose, all very well for holidaymakers but the situation is grim so far as primary producers are concerned.

I think I mentioned on the phone that someone else was offered the Adelaide job for which I applied. He is Bill Gammage,¹³² a lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea with good publications so it is not surprising that I missed out. I recently applied for a lectureship in Queensland so hope something will come of that.

UWA 3 June 1976 [to my father]

This is just a short note to say how very sorry I was to hear of Grandpa's death. While he had a good innings in life, a strong link with your past and that of the whole family is broken. I gather that the experience you have been through has been rather traumatic. My thoughts are with you.

UWA 4 June 1976

Thanks so very much for your letters and also Mum for the telephone call yesterday. Although 91 is a good age for anyone, Grandpa's death still seems unreal. All my life he has been such a dominant personality. Things will not be quite the same without

¹³¹ Harry Aveling later held senior positions in various universities.

¹³² Bill Gammage was later Professor in the Humanities Research Centre at ANU.

him. I hope by the time you read this that his funeral will have taken place and you are able to settle down again.

I was rather sorry that you decided to move again [to Pymble in Sydney]. I fully understand your reasons for doing so but cannot help feeling that it will all be very hectic. You have so many possessions at Burradoo that it will take some time to rearrange them in a new house. Living on the upper north shore, however, will not be all that different to being in Burradoo. In a lot of ways the two areas are similar, with the north shore having a decided advantage as far as its proximity to Sydney is concerned. I hope you find a place that appeals to you.

After I wrote last week I spent the evening watching television. I mainly shopped on Saturday morning and read in the afternoon. That evening I went to a party held by my friend Astrid Fernandes. She belongs to a Goan family that President Amin¹³³ threw out of Uganda. The food was very good indeed. On Sunday I went for a pleasant drive to Kalamunda and then on to Mundaring via a pretty back road. On Sunday night I saw an interesting and unusual film at the IFT. It was 'L'Enfant Sauvage' and was about a child who lived like a wild animal in a French forest during the late eighteenth century, was discovered and then educated in human ways.

On Monday the term was with us again. On Wednesday I lectured on Australia and the Indonesian struggle for independence and today on Australia and the Vietnam War. Tutorials were concerned with the gold rushes in Victoria and the Petrov Affair. Discussions on the latter were interesting as each group reached different conclusions. Yesterday I listened to Professor Geoffrey Sawer of ANU¹³⁴ give a fascinating lecture on 'November 11' and heard him again today on the 'The Whitlam Government and the Executive Power of the Commonwealth'.

The weather here has finally realised it is winter. The last few days were quite cold. A couple of days ago the temperature got down to five degrees.

UWA 11 June 1976

Thank you so much for your letters and phone call. It was so nice to hear your voices again. I was glad that you managed to find a good house without too much hassle. I hope that you get the price you want for Burradoo. The arrangements about storing

¹³³ Idi Amin was President of Uganda.

¹³⁴ Geoffrey Sawer was Professor of Law.

my furniture [I did not move any furniture to Perth] are fine. When I am next with you I should be able to make a definite decision about it.

*I have been busy since last writing. On Friday night I went to dinner at the home of Tom and Maria Stannage.¹³⁵ It is a lovely old house in Subiaco. I had an excellent meal and the company was most enjoyable. On Saturday morning I shopped in the city. I bought clothes and records. On Saturday night I went to the birthday party of Arthur Darragh,¹³⁶ a British economist at UWA. It was very lively. I did not get to bed until quite late. For much of Sunday I read Barbara Tuchman's interesting and well-written book *Sand Against the Wind: Stilwell and the American Experience in China*. On Sunday night I went to the IFT to see 'The Skydivers', an enjoyable film but with a rather sad finish.*

During the week I took tutorials on Sir Henry Parkes and Gorton's¹³⁷ election to the Liberal Party leadership. I lectured on Papua New Guinea and the White Australia Policy. Next week Barry Smith, an ANU historian,¹³⁸ is visiting the department.

Please give my best wishes to My-Van when you see her. I had a letter from her a few days ago when she was at the New South Wales south coast. She is very relieved that her thesis is finished.

UWA 18 June 1976

Thanks so very much for your letters and also, Mum, for the phone call. I am sorry that My-Van missed me. I am glad that Grandpa's funeral was so well attended and conducted. Your portrait of him Dad was very good. Thanks also for the \$50. I am sure I will use it for a good purpose. It was, of course, nice to learn about the legacy [from my grandfather] although I guess it will be some time before I receive it.

My main news is that I am going east for the August vacation period, 7-29 August. The department gave me money for my fares and subsistence. There is a conference on Jack Lang and his times at Macquarie University that I will attend. I shall also do research [on my 1901 project] in Canberra and Sydney. I will spend about two weeks in Sydney so hope that you will have moved by then so that I can stay

¹³⁵ Maria Stannage was a schoolteacher.

¹³⁶ Arthur Darragh was Senior Tutor in Economics. He later returned to Britain.

¹³⁷ Sir John Gorton was non-Labor Prime Minister of Australia.

¹³⁸ Barry Smith was Professorial Fellow in History. He was later Professor of History.

with you. It will be wonderful to see you again. I would like Mum if it is not inconvenient to borrow your car for the week I am in Canberra but don't worry if that does not suit you as I can easily rent one. [My parents had their own cars.] My going east in August means that I will be unable to spend more than about a week there at the end of the year.

Shortly after writing last week I went to a party at the home of Frank and Ulli Broeze.¹³⁹ Frank, a Dutchman, is a lecturer in my department who specialises in maritime history. It was most enjoyable and I did not get home until quite late. I played tennis on Saturday morning and worked in the afternoon. I watched television that evening. I mainly read on Sunday until I went to the farewell party of a friend who is moving to Adelaide. It was in an Italian restaurant and we all ate very well.

*This week my tutorial groups discussed class in nineteenth century Australia and the 1972 federal election. On Wednesday I lectured on contemporary Australia, focussing on last year's political events. [I discussed at some length Donald Horne's views in his just published book *Death of the Lucky Country*.] Barry Smith from ANU visited the department. He gave excellent seminars on Australian religious history and Britain in 1848. He is lecturing for me this afternoon on larrikinism in Australian politics. Tonight some of us are taking him to dinner at a restaurant.*

UWA 25 June 1976

Thank you for your letters. I was very sorry to read about Auntie Marion's illness and hope that she is now a great deal better. A long rest will no doubt do her the world of good. She is, I suppose, delighted that [my cousin] Libby¹⁴⁰ and [her husband] Ross [Kalucy] are returning [to Australia from Britain]. Ross should be pleased at becoming a Professor [of Psychiatry at Flinders University in Adelaide] at such a young age. Being in a medical faculty his salary will also be higher than those of non-medical Professors. I am glad that you can move soon and hope that you can sell the house at Burradoo without too much delay.

Last Friday I joined other Australian history colleagues from my department in taking Barry Smith to dinner at an excellent Yugoslav restaurant in the city. I had an enormous amount to eat, as the food was so good. I spent most of the weekend

¹³⁹ Ulli Broeze was a museum conservator.

¹⁴⁰ Libby Kalucy was an entomologist. She was later Associate Professor in Health Sciences at Flinders University.

marking first year essays and also read. On Sunday night I saw 'The Fixer' at the IFT. It starred Alan Bates and Dirk Bogarde and was the story of a Jew imprisoned in Tsarist Russia.

Because History 340 ended last week and my special topics do not begin until next week I had only three first year tutorials to take. They were on bushranging. We had some lively discussions. At the beginning of each tutorial I played folk songs. This seemed to be appreciated.

At the beginning of the week I received a copy of My-Van's certificate of Australian citizenship that she got only a couple of days before she left for England.

UWA 2 July 1976

Thanks so very much for your last letters. I am sorry that you have had so little interest in the house. I hope that prospective buyers show up before not too long. Selling a house often seems difficult. I remember that the house at Iluka Road [in the Sydney suburb of Mosman where my parents lived from 1951 until 1973] was also hard to get rid of.

Last Friday night I saw the film 'All the President's Men' starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman. It dealt with the two reporters who uncovered the Watergate conspiracy. It was absorbing all the way through. You should see it if you can. I shopped on Saturday morning and read in the afternoon. That night I saw another enjoyable film, 'The Man Who Would Be King' starring Michael Caine and Sean Connery. It concerned two former army Sergeants in British India who went to a remote part of Afghanistan and established themselves as rulers there. It is based on a Rudyard Kipling story. On Sunday morning I read. Because the weather was so lovely I went for a walk along Cottesloe Beach in the afternoon. That evening I went to the IFT to see an interesting and unusual French film called 'The Mississippi Mermaid'.

I was busy during the week with my special topics. I had seminars on concepts of racism, liberalism and federalism and tutorials on racial thought in nineteenth century Australia, Louis Hartz's 'fragment thesis' and Australia's experience of federalism. Most went well enough although a couple of groups were hard going. On Monday night I attended an interesting seminar on Italian migration to Australia between the two world wars. The paper led to an enthusiastic debate about the impact of migrants on Australian society. On Wednesday I went to Geoff Bolton's seminar on

'Australian History – A Tale of Two Cities?' It dealt with the impact of the smaller states on the making and writing of Australian history.

As far as my travel plans for August are concerned, I shall probably arrive in Sydney on the morning of 7 August, stay until 9 August and then drive to Canberra. I want to be there until 18 August and shall return to Sydney, where I will stay until 29 August.

UWA 9 July 1976

Many thanks for your letters. Thank you also Dad for your phone call. I was sorry that there was still no interest in the house. I saw it advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald.

What do you think of the proposed [general strike to protest against proposed changes to Medibank] on Monday? By the time you get this letter it will all be over. Although I disapprove of the government's Medibank policy a national strike will cause needless disruption and only harden the resolve of Fraser and co. If Hawke could speak openly he would probably admit this. In the meantime we are to have no public transport, little electric power and most of secondary industry shut down for the day. The university will still hold classes as usual but students may not be able to get here.

I spent much of Friday and Saturday evenings watching the Wimbledon [tennis] finals on television. I particularly enjoyed the [Yvonne] Cawley-[Chris] Evert match. Only at the very end did a winner emerge. I was pleased that [Bjorn] Borg won the men's singles but it was a rather one-sided affair. On Saturday morning, as usual, I shopped in the city. In the afternoon I drove to New Norcia, about 140 kilometres from Perth. It began as a mission station for Aborigines run by Spanish monks. The old Spanish style buildings and monks are still there. The Aborigines, though, have gone. I mainly read on Sunday. That night I saw 'Distant Thunder' at the IFT. It was a superb Indian film about the experience of a Bengali village during the great famine of 1943.

This week's seminars were the Aborigines before 1850, the reasons for federation and the coming of colonial self-government. Tutorials were on the extermination of Aborigines in Tasmania, Australian nationalism and responsible government in New South Wales. The reading on inter-racial relations is especially interesting. The latest research reveals much greater Aboriginal resistance to white

people than was once believed to be the case. On Wednesday Brian Stoddart gave a very good staff seminar on sport in Western Australia.



New Norcia in July 1975

UWA 16 July 1976

Thanks for your letters. I am sorry that the house still remains unsold. I hope that the auction means that a buyer will be found. I was interested to learn about Tom's exhibition. It is brave of him not to hold it in a gallery. I hope the gamble comes off.

Last Friday night I ate with friends at the Bohemia restaurant in the city, where we all enjoyed the food. On Saturday morning I played tennis although very badly. I also shopped. After lunch I went for a drive through the hills area to Mundaring Weir. Although spring still has some time to come wildflowers are beginning to appear. On Sunday morning I discovered that my car had a flat battery because the alternator was not working. I took it to an auto electrician on Tuesday and the trouble was fixed at the cost of \$62. I should not complain as it is the first real problem I have had with the car. [It was a 1974 Datsun 180B and was generally most reliable.]

The general strike was less effective in Perth than in other cities. Buses ran and all the shops were open. Transport workers refused to strike. There were no blackouts.

My special topic seminars were on the 'founding fathers', land reform and Aborigines and Aborigines from the mid nineteenth century. Tutorials were on Alfred Deakin, the New South Wales land legislation of 1861 and the development of Aboriginal policy in colonial Western Australia. On Wednesday morning Professor Chiang Yee of Columbia University gave a seminar on China in the twentieth century.

Tonight I will attend Currie Hall's annual dinner dance.

UWA 19 July 1976 [to my father]

Many thanks for the Touring Guide to Scotland. It is a beautiful book. I have already read sections of it. I hope to make practical use of its contents in the not too distant future. I am sorry it took so long to get here. You must have thought me rude in not previously thanking you for it. I guess the shipping service between Scotland and Western Australia is not very frequent.

I have now made bookings for my journey to Sydney next month. I arrive on 7 August at 8.10 AM on TAA flight 572 from Melbourne. I leave Perth at 10.45 PM on 6 August by TAA flight 15 to Melbourne. I was unable to get a straight through connection so will have a couple of hours to wait at Melbourne Airport.

UWA 23 July 1976

Thanks so much for the letters. I was delighted to see that Tom's exhibition went so well. He must be pleased as well as richer. I hope to see some of his pictures when I am in Sydney with you.

I went to the Currie Hall dinner dance last Friday night. It was most enjoyable. The band played very fast and furious music so that by about midnight most of us were quite exhausted. I slept in on Saturday morning and then shopped. In the afternoon I joined Rob and Jan Stuart for a drive to the Swan Valley vineyards. We returned home via Mundaring. I mainly read on Saturday evening and spent most of Sunday working. On Sunday night I went to see an Italian film called 'Accattone'. It was so boring that I left after about half an hour.

My seminars were on the Chinese in Australia, the writing of the federal constitution and compulsory, secular and free education. Tutorials were on the

Chinese on the goldfields, the development of the Commonwealth's power over trade and commerce and the Victorian Education Act of 1872. On Wednesday I attended a seminar by Stuart Macintyre from Murdoch University¹⁴¹ on the British Labour Party during the 1920s.

I spent a lot of my spare time watching TV. Added to my normal fare of 'Upstairs, Downstairs' and 'The Pallisers' I watched the Olympic broadcasts every night. I thoroughly enjoyed them although the standard of Australian swimming is terrible. I was up early a few mornings ago to see Stephen Holland's [swimming] race so was disappointed that he did not get a gold medal. [He was considered Australia's best chance for one.]

I received a letter from My-Van this morning. She had her PhD oral and everything seems to be all right regarding her thesis. She would like to return for her graduation in September but does not think she can afford it. She sends you her best wishes. I also had a letter from Rowland Sammut, who is now in Southampton. He is enjoying the English summer.

Many people are very worried about the dry weather. Western Australia is heading for the worst drought in its history unless rain comes very soon. Last Sunday in Perth it was 25 degrees, the hottest July day on record.

I hope the moving is not wearing you out too much.

UWA 30 July 1976

Thank you for the letter and phone call. By the time you receive this letter you will be within a few days of the big move. I hope that it all goes satisfactorily. You will be relieved when it is finished.

I spent last Friday evening reading and watching television. I shopped on Saturday morning. On Saturday night I went to a flat warming party by Penny Herbert, whom I knew in Canberra. She is Tutor in Chinese at Murdoch University.¹⁴² It was a pleasant occasion. I did not get home until fairly late. On Sunday afternoon I took advantage of the fine weather to go for a drive. I took a route along the south

¹⁴¹ Stuart Macintyre was Tutor in History. He was later Dean of Arts and Professor of History at The University of Melbourne.

¹⁴² Penny Herbert was later Senior Tutor and Temporary Lecturer in Chinese before becoming an artist.

side of the Swan River, which is just as pretty as the north side if not more so. On Sunday night I saw an excellent film at the IFT called 'Le Boucher'.

I had seminars on the Melanesian labour trade, the writing of the federal constitution and nineteenth century liberal politicians. Tutorials were on responses to the Melanesians in Queensland, the development of the Commonwealth's arbitration and conciliation power and the life of Charles Pearson. On Monday night I went to a poor postgraduate seminar on the capitalisation of Western Australian goldfields during the 1890s.

Last night I saw the Bolshoi Ballet at the Entertainment Centre. It was a delight to watch although I would have preferred it to perform one complete ballet rather than a series of excerpts. Tonight I am going to a dinner put on by some Asian students.

Lack of rainfall remains a major worry. Large parts of the state are being declared drought areas while Perth's water supplies next summer will almost certainly have to be rationed. Much of the world is sharing the same problem.

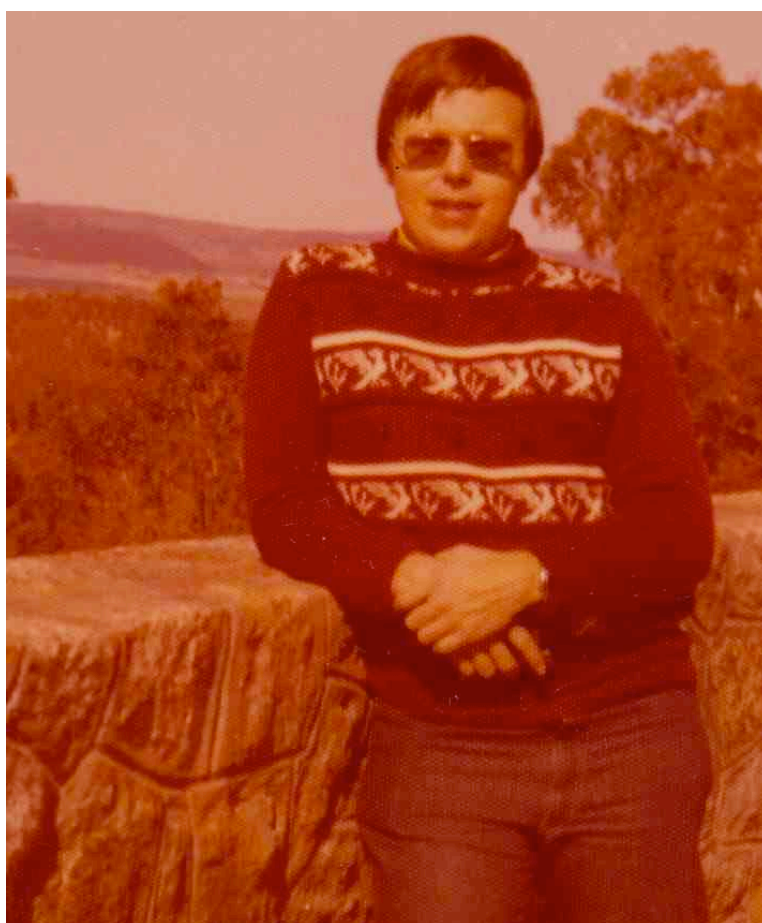


Swan River in July 1976

On 5 August I went to an enjoyable dinner at Liu Yat-wing's home.

During my stay in Canberra I did research at the National Library and saw old friends. I had lunch with an impressive recent UWA History Honours graduate, Alan Thomas,¹⁴³ who had recently commenced a PhD at ANU. Isabel and Peter Durack generously arranged for me to join them and Peter's staff member Deborah Robinson,¹⁴⁴ whom I previously knew as a UWA History postgraduate student and a part-time tutor, for lunch on 18 August in the members' dining room at Parliament House. It was fascinating to observe so many well-known politicians there.

The Lang conference at Macquarie University went well. My research in Sydney was mainly at the State Library. I enjoyed being with my parents and seeing other family members.



The author near Canberra in August 1976

¹⁴³ Alan Thomas was later an Australian ambassador.

¹⁴⁴ Deborah Robinson later completed an MA degree.

UWA 3 September 1976

Thank you so very, very much for looking after me so well in Sydney. I really had an enjoyable time. It was good to see you both and other members of the family again. Thanks also Mum for the use of your car. My activities would have far been far more restricted without it.

After you left me [at Sydney Airport] on Sunday night I went upstairs in the terminal to await my flight. It was delayed for about 30 minutes. We eventually departed and the flight to Perth was quite pleasant. In the seat next to me was Peter Reeves, who had attended an Asian Studies conference in Sydney. I was met at Perth Airport. I arrived back at Currie Hall at about 11.30 PM Perth time.

Since then I have devoted much of my time to marking. There were about 50 exam papers and a similar number of essays waiting for me. I have been working until late each night getting through them and now have most behind me. They are of mixed quality.

I am now tutoring in one course, which makes my preparation easier. This week we discussed the emergence of the colonial Labor parties during the 1890s. Next week we move onto Australia and the Boer War.

UWA 10 September 1976

Thank you Dad for the letter. I was sorry Mum that you were unwell. It was good to hear you on the phone. It is a shame that you did not get what you wanted for the house at Burradoo. It will, nevertheless, be a relief not to own two houses.

*I resumed my normal activities last Saturday morning when I shopped in town. That evening I dined with friends at a Chinese restaurant on Scarborough Beach Road. We then went on to the Hole in the Wall Theatre at Leederville to see a play based on Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*. It was not easily followed as part of it was in mime. The main theme was man versus the system. I spent most of Sunday reading and marking. On Sunday night I saw a very good episode of 'Warship'.*

Tutorials this week were on Australia and the Boer War. It is an interesting subject that resulted in lively discussions. About 16,000 Australians fought in the war. I was also busy preparing for next week's subject, man and the environment in South Australia, about which I previously knew little. I am writing an article on Australia and the Geneva Protocol of 1924. [This was finished and submitted to a few good journals but each rejected it, mainly on the basis of its narrow approach.]

There is still no news about my job applications. There probably will not be for some time yet. My latest applications are for a lectureship at Griffith University and a postdoctoral fellowship at ANU.

What do you think of Mao's¹⁴⁵ death? ABC TV had an excellent documentary on him last night. It will be interesting to see who succeeds him.

I am glad Tom is safely in London. I wrote to him last week.

UWA 17 September 1976

I have not heard from you since I last wrote so hope that everything is all right. I also hope you are feeling better Mum.

I had tutorials during the week on man and the environment in South Australia with a focus on how agriculture and towns altered the environment. The students have an essay due next week so attendance was not marvellous. A group that I took over from another tutor mainly consists of middle-aged women. They are all most enthusiastic and talkative.

I was on duty at Currie Hall last weekend. I did, though, get to the IFT on Sunday evening to see a very good but depressing film called 'Fat City'. Sunday was the first anniversary of my PhD graduation.

The weather here is excellent. The days are warm without being hot. There are beautiful wildflowers. Some people are beginning to swim again. I don't think I will be for a while yet.

I received a letter from My-Van and Fred this week. It was written from Spain where they are both on holiday. They appeared to be having a marvellous time there. I also heard from Ian Hamill. He says he will be delighted to see Tom.

There is still no further news about job applications. I applied for a few more positions.

Not long after writing the above letter I travelled to Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (now Central Queensland University) at Rockhampton to be interviewed for the position of Lecturer in History there. On 22 September Brian Stoddart drove me to Perth Airport from where I flew to Sydney. After a short stay with my parents, I flew onto Rockhampton on 24 September. I was interviewed on the same day.

¹⁴⁵ Mao Zedong was leader of China.

Following the interview I was informally advised that the interview panel would recommend that I be offered the position. I spent much of 25 September exploring the Rockhampton area before returning to Perth on 26 September.

UWA 1 October 1976

Thank you so much for looking after me while I was in Sydney last week. It was wonderful to see you and Ann again. After speaking with you on the phone last Sunday evening I had a smooth flight back to Perth. I was there by midnight local time. It was, of course, nice to know that I will probably be offered the Rockhampton job. I will, however, keep my fingers crossed until it is on paper in front of me. There is always the chance of some sort of hitch. I should know by about the 11th or 12th of this month.

In the meantime I am being interviewed for the Parliamentary Fellow position in Canberra. I will be in Canberra for one and a half days on the 11th and 12th. I cannot on this occasion, unfortunately, stay in Sydney. I have commitments here in Perth over the weekend and a seminar to attend on the Wednesday.

The Temporary Lecturer job for which I applied here has yet to be finally decided. I understand that the choice is now between me and another person. There is, though, the possibility that the university administration will not allow it to be filled.

I was busy during the week marking essays. There are about 50 to read. As they are all on the same subject it is not all that exciting. My tutorials were on George Reid¹⁴⁶ and federation. Most of the discussions were good. Reid was a colourful character. There was a departmental seminar on Wednesday.

On Wednesday evening I went with Ernie Jones to the Perth Royal Show at Claremont. It was a smaller version of the Royal Easter Show. I quite enjoyed myself and bought a sheepskin rug.

The weather in Perth is unusually cool. I am finding it pleasant after Rockhampton's heat.

I hope you are both well and treating the dogs properly. If I hear any more on the job front before Friday I will let you know.

¹⁴⁶ Sir George Reid was non-Labor Premier of New South Wales and Prime Minister of Australia.

UWA 8 October 1976

Thank you Dad for your letter. It was good to get all your news. I am sorry that the industrial situation continues to worry you. Perhaps things will soon begin to improve.

As I mentioned in my last letter, I shall be in Canberra for a day next week. The whole interview may be unnecessary as I hope by then the Rockhampton job is decided. I should be hearing from Capricornia next week. I will ring you from Canberra either on Monday night or Tuesday.

I had a quiet weekend. Pouring rain rather restricted my activities. On Sunday night I thoroughly enjoyed watching 'From Russia with Love' on TV.

*On Monday night I attended an excellent seminar given by Penny Hetherington¹⁴⁷ from my department on oral history. There was very enthusiastic discussion afterwards. I had my last tutorials for the year during the week. The topic was a discussion of Russel Ward's book *The Australian Legend*. Most students seem to have enjoyed reading it. As the exams come nearer some are becoming rather nervous. I am regularly pressed for hints about the paper. I spent much of my time marking essays. I am also helping to organise a party next Friday for third year students.*

This evening I join friends to celebrate the end of term at a Greek restaurant in the city. On Sunday I am going to the annual York Fair with Melissa Tully, an Irishwoman who is doing a Master's degree in Psychology.¹⁴⁸ There are going to be lots of arts and crafts people there. I have heard that it is a most enjoyable occasion. As I am unlikely to be in Perth next year I should not miss it.

Melissa and I found that the York Fair lived up to our expectations. We had a great day there.

UWA 15 October 1976

Thanks very much for the phone call on Monday evening. It was good to hear from you again. You just caught me as I was checking out of my motel. I intended to ring

¹⁴⁷ Penny, later Pen, Hetherington, was Senior Tutor in History. She was later Senior Lecturer in History.

¹⁴⁸ Melissa Tully was later a psychologist in Western Australia and New South Wales.

you again on late Tuesday afternoon before I changed planes in Sydney. The flight from Canberra was, however, delayed and I was lucky not to miss the flight to Perth.

The interview was not very long. The chairman of the panel was Senator G.S. Davidson,¹⁴⁹ a Liberal. Others present included the former Labor Minister Gordon Bryant. I think they were interviewing quite a few other candidates. [I did not learn whether or not I would be offered this position as I withdrew my application as soon as I accepted the Capricornia lectureship.] I had little time to see any friends in Canberra. I did, nevertheless, get in touch with Don Vandenberg. We had a couple of drinks together and he drove me to the airport. He sends you both his best regards.

I have still not heard from Rockhampton. I shall let you know when I do.

Tutorials are finished now. I have, though, been seeing many students about their exam preparation. On Wednesday morning I attended a most interesting seminar about first year university students – who they are, where they come from, how they get on etc. This evening a few colleagues and I are organising a party for our third year students.

UWA 22 October 1976

Thanks so much for the phone call, letter and telex. It was, as always, good hearing from you. According to what I heard on the radio this morning the mail bans have been lifted so I hope you receive this letter in good time.

It has been a hectic week. I received the telegram from Capricornia on Monday and the letter a couple of days later. Just after I decided to accept the offer I was offered the Temporary Lecturer position here for which I applied. I will stick to my original decision. If the long-term job situation were a little less bleak I would certainly stay at UWA. Working at a university is probably more interesting than at a college of advanced education [as Capricornia then was]. I should, however, opt for the more secure position. [The UWA job was for a year. That at Capricornia was initially for three years with the likelihood that it would then become tenured, which is what happened. Stephen Foster¹⁵⁰ was offered and accepted the UWA position after I decided not to take it. The temporary History positions at UWA disappeared by the early 1980s.]

¹⁴⁹ Gordon Davidson represented South Australia in the Senate.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen Foster was later Professor in the Humanities Research Centre at ANU.

Now that I know where I will be next year I have decided to spend three weeks in Britain between 26 November and 17 December. I booked my flights this morning and will leave from and return to Perth. On my return I will rest for a couple of days and then drive to Sydney for Christmas. I wrote to Ian Hamill and My-Van. I shall probably stay for a while with the latter. My present plan is to spend 10 days in London and another 10 days touring in a rented car. I shall write to Tom this weekend.

Last Friday night I did much of the organising of a third year students' party. It was held in the Stuarts' garden and was very successful. [After it finished Brian de Garis, Chris Weckert and I had a coffee and a long chat.] I did not get back to Currie Hall until after midnight and then joined in the party there. I was not in bed until after two in the morning and had a long sleep in. On Saturday I was back at the Stuarts' house for dinner. It was a good meal and a pleasant evening. It was very hot on Saturday. Fortunately the weather has cooled down a lot since then. I spent Sunday quietly and watched 'Dr No' on TV that night.

This week is the first in what some here call 'swotvac'. The university is pretty quiet. Many staff members are away, some working at home and others on holiday before the exams commence. Some people I know are in Rottnest Island for a week or so.

Last night I went to an ANU convocation get together at which Dr Coombs¹⁵¹ was the guest speaker. It was an enjoyable evening but Dr Coombs's speech was rather incoherent. Tonight I go to a Greek restaurant for the Currie Hall staff's end of year dinner.

UWA 29 October 1976

Thank you so much for your letters and phone call. I was, as always, great to get all your news. I am glad you are pleased with the new car. It must be a relief after the trouble you had with the previous one.

I have now made plans for my vacation. I leave Perth on the evening of Saturday 27 November and return on the evening of Monday 20 December, I am renting a car between 6 and 14 December on a package arrangement that includes discount accommodation in first class hotels. During this period I will probably stay

¹⁵¹ 'Nugget' Coombs was Chancellor of ANU.

in York, Edinburgh, Castle Douglas, Windermere, hopefully Eastnor [where my parents had friends], Gwbert on Sea, Tintern and Oxford. [My final itinerary varied somewhat from this. It was York, Edinburgh, Inverness, Turnberry, Windermere, Tintern and Oxford.] My idea is to sample as many different parts of Britain that I can in the available time. Otherwise I will stay in London with My-Van and Fred. My-Van suggests that we go to Paris for a couple of days, which seems tempting. I wrote to Tom and hope to spend time with him. I am glad I will arrive back in Perth at night as that gives me a chance to rest for as much as a day before driving to Sydney. I should arrive there in time for dinner on Christmas Eve. I hope to have a co-driver.

Last weekend I was on duty at Currie Hall so had a fairly quiet time reading. I went out, though, on Friday and Saturday nights. On Friday I joined other Currie Hall tutorial staff members for dinner at a Greek restaurant. On Saturday night I went to a dinner given by Melissa Tully.

I attempted, although rather slowly, to get an article finished during the week. [This was on the Fusion of the non-Labor parties in 1909. I was dissatisfied with the finished article and did not submit it for publication.] On Tuesday night I saw a quite good film called 'Aces High' that dealt with the life of a Royal Flying Corps pilot during the First World War. The air sequences were cleverly done. On Wednesday I went to lunch in honour of Sir Keith Hancock,¹⁵² perhaps Australia's most highly regarded living historian. He was returning from Britain and his ship stopped in Fremantle for a day. Though close to 80, he seemed energetic.

I remember that last year you thought I might like a car air conditioner for Christmas. Now that I am moving to a humid climate I am considering installing one. They are pretty expensive so I would not expect you to pay the whole cost but a small contribution towards it as a Christmas present will be most welcome.

UWA 9 November 1976

Thank you for your letter and all the addresses [of my parents' British friends]. I hope to make good use of them. I also hope this letter reaches you in reasonable time as there is a 'go slow' at the main mail exchange here.

I have heard no more from Capricornia, which is annoying, as I want to complete all the formalities associated with my appointment before going away.

¹⁵² Sir Keith Hancock was formerly Professor of History at ANU.

After I wrote last Friday I had dinner with friends at an Italian restaurant. I spent most of Saturday watching cricket on television. On Sunday I drove to Guilderton, a small coastal resort about 100 kilometres north of Perth. It was a beautiful day and the sea was a deep blue.

Since then life has been pretty quiet. I worked slowly on my article. Marking starts on Wednesday next week. At night I am reading the Flashman novels by George MacDonald Fraser. They are most entertaining. I spent yesterday evening listening to a complete recording of 'Tosca' that I received from the World Record Club.

What did you think of [Jimmy] Carter's victory [in the United States presidential election]? While [Gerald] Ford was dull and unimaginative, Carter is still an unknown quantity. I fail to see how anyone without experience of national office can grasp all the problems that the American President must deal with.

UWA 12 November 1976

Thanks, as always, for your letters. It was also good to hear from you on the phone a couple of days ago. I was very sorry to learn about the Tooths business [my father had resigned as a director of Tooth and Company, a beer brewer, after disagreements with other board members] but it may be a blessing in disguise [it was].

I hope the industrial situation improves by the time you get this letter. The oil workers' dispute seems completely irresponsible. A small group of people should not be able to use its industrial muscle in such a fashion. We are not yet affected in Western Australia as the refinery workers here are under a state award. If, though, the dispute continues I suspect that the workers here will be drawn into it. The looming postal strike, if it does occur, is more complex. The federal government has needlessly exacerbated the situation.

After speaking with you on the phone I received a letter from the Head of the Department of Arts at Capricornia, Doug Sadler, and also a copy of its handbook. My name is included in the staff members' list. I intend to start there on Monday 9 January.

I also had a further letter from My-Van and Fred. They will meet me at the airport and provided a list of duty free items they would like. Both send you their kindest regards. I am really looking forward to the trip now that it is only a little more than two weeks away. I will, though, be sorry to leave Perth, especially now that friends are starting to farewell me.

Last Saturday I went, as usual, to town. On Sunday I had a very pleasant drive to Mandurah and Pinjarah. On the way I stopped at the Serpentine Reservoir, one of the sources of Perth's water supplies.

Much of the week was spent marking exam papers. I have just finished the third year ones, which are generally good. I will begin the first year papers tomorrow. On Wednesday I had lunch with Sally Callander,¹⁵³ a student of mine from last year's third year group with whom I am now friendly. [She was completing her Diploma in Education.] Tonight I am going to a French restaurant with friends from Currie Hall.

The weather had been extraordinary over the past few days. It has been very cold and wet with strong winds. It is currently snowing in the state's southwest, the first November snow there for over 60 years. So much for the suntan I hoped to get!

UWA 19 November 1976

Thank you for your letters. With the weather and industrial situation Sydney is not going through a happy period.

Last Friday night I went to The Peppercorn French restaurant in Mosman Park with friends from Currie Hall. We had an excellent and most enjoyable meal. I shopped on Saturday morning and marked exam papers that afternoon. I also spent most of Sunday marking and it has kept me busy since then. The first year papers are very variable. My marks range from 15 to 33 out of 40. For the last few Sunday evenings I have watched the excellent BBC series 'South Riding' on television. If you have not seen it yet I can strongly recommend it.

I am busy sorting things out for my move. Grace Brothers [the removalists] are shifting my stuff on Wednesday morning so I do not have much time left. Next week will be hectic socially. I hope I survive it all so that I can stagger onto the plane.

On Monday night I attended a party hosted by Cheryl Praeger¹⁵⁴ and her husband John Henstridge,¹⁵⁵ whom I knew at University House and now work at UWA. They live at St George's College. Last night I went to an excellent Chinese meal with Estie and a few other people to celebrate the completion of her degree. She

¹⁵³ Sally Callander, later Sally Langdon, was a schoolteacher.

¹⁵⁴ Cheryl Praeger was Temporary Lecturer in Mathematics. She was later Professor of Mathematics.

¹⁵⁵ John Henstridge was Temporary Senior Tutor in Mathematics. He was later Managing Director of Data Analysis Australia.

received her results that afternoon and was, naturally, very excited. She hopes to work as a dentist in the Air Force for a couple of years before going into private practice.

UWA 23 November 1976

Many thanks for your letter, which I received this morning. All the preparations for my trip are well in hand now. I am very much looking forward to it. My itinerary is as follows.

27 November – depart Perth 1700 on BA 889 (Y)

28 November – arrive London 0650

28 November-6 December & 15 December-19 December – c/- F Robins, 13 Thorsden Way, London, SE19, England (phone – 01-670-6082)

6 December-15 December – on tour in car

19 December – depart London 1830 on BA 888 (Y)

20 December – arrive Perth 2310

I shall be in in the History Department for most of 21 December and will probably set off for Sydney early on 22nd. There is no reason why my trip to Sydney should take any longer than three days, especially now that the road is sealed all the way. However, if it does I will let you know.

I wrote to Tom at his studio address and asked him to give me a ring after my arrival. If I don't hear from him I will, as you suggest, get in touch with Libby.

I am afraid that I have not managed to air condition the car yet. The places I contacted are all solidly booked until mid December, much too late for me. Perhaps you can make a booking for me in Sydney. I plan to be there until 7 January so any time before then should do. You might also like to book my car in with the nearest Datsun agent for its 45,000 kilometres service. The servicing people will, I imagine, be pretty busy over the holiday period.

I am sorry to hear about My Alldis's¹⁵⁶ death and Mr Neave's¹⁵⁷ illness [neighbours at Iluka Road]. I don't blame you for finding the atmosphere depressing.

¹⁵⁶ Ollie Alldis was a businessman.

¹⁵⁷ Greig Neave was an architect.

I have remained busy. On Friday night I went to a party at the Broezes' house. I shopped on Saturday morning and surfed at Cottesloe in the afternoon. On Saturday night I went with friends to see 'Gone with the Wind', which I thoroughly enjoyed for the second time. On Sunday I went to a barbecue at Bert Hallam's house. Most other people from the department were there. We had an enjoyable time splashing about in his pool. Yesterday I attended an examiners' meeting.

UWA 26 November 1976

Thanks so much for the phone call. It was good to hear from you. I hope that by the time you receive this the petrol situation has improved. Should Jiu-Wan¹⁵⁸ call again Mum I would be grateful if you could invite her for a meal. She was a good friend in Currie Hall. I get the impression that she is not really happy in Sydney.

The week has remained busy. On Tuesday there was a staff meeting and the department gave me a farewell lunch. That night I took Sally Callander for an enjoyable dinner at El Sombrero. I accepted her most generous offer to meet me at the airport when I return to Perth close to midnight. Grace Bothers took my things away on Wednesday morning. That evening I took Estie to dinner at The Garlic Clove, a good French restaurant. On Thursday the Australian history postgraduate students gave me a lunch at Subiaco. It was also very enjoyable. [Lenore Layman organised this.] I went to dinner at the Weckerts' home on Thursday night. This morning I had a third year examiners' meeting before having lunch with Cheryl Praeger and John Henstridge.

Enclosed is a complete plan of my movements for the next couple of months. Please do write to me care of Fred, as there is no problem with the mail reaching me there. I shall write to you as much as possible.

London 29 November 1976 [extract from a much longer letter]

On Friday night after I wrote to you I had a very enjoyable meal with friends from the department at The Romany restaurant in William Street. [It was a great night. Brian de Garis thoughtfully organised the occasion as a farewell to Brian Stoddart, who was moving to the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and me. I still have as a kitchen decoration the Chianti bottle seen in the photograph below.] On Saturday I

¹⁵⁸ Tan Jiu-Wan was a former Currie Hall resident working as an accountant.

completed my packing and then had lunch at Penny Hetherington's house. The plane was due to leave at 5.00 PM but because of engine trouble in Sydney was delayed for seven hours. During the waiting period I was provided with a room and a meal at the Parmelia Hotel. We finally got away at about midnight.



Brian Stoddart, Trish Crawford, the author, Ulli Broeze and Ernie Jones at The Romany restaurant in November 1976

The holiday, my first trip to Britain, went well. My-Van and Fred were marvellous hosts. As well as seeing parts of England, Scotland and Wales I travelled to France. I spent a few days in Paris, where I unexpectedly encountered my UWA colleague Hugh Owen.¹⁵⁹ I think we were equally surprised to meet one another there. Visiting places in Scotland where my ancestors lived was especially rewarding. I sent postcards to friends in Perth and elsewhere, including one I promised to Sally Callander of the beautiful small Scottish town from which her surname might have derived.

¹⁵⁹ Hugh Owen was Senior Lecturer in History.



The author at Paris, France in December 1976

Unlike my flight to London, the journey home was on time. Sally was waiting for me at Perth Airport. She drove me to the Stuarts' house, where I had left my car. Rob and Jan kindly accommodated me for the next couple of nights. I spent 21 December in the department, where I returned to Phyllis Langley her husband's warm winter coat that I borrowed.

My passenger on the car trip to Sydney was a Currie Hall friend, Patrick Tso.¹⁶⁰ The journey went well until a stone thrown from a truck completely shattered my car windscreen. It was replaced at the small South Australian town of Port Wakefield. The delay meant that I did not reach my parents' home in Sydney until Christmas Day.

¹⁶⁰ Patrick Tso was a PhD student in Pathology. He was later Professor of Pathology at the University of Cincinnati.

EPILOGUE

I was at Capricornia until the end of 1981, when I moved to Darwin. I retired in 2008 as Professor of History at Charles Darwin University (formerly Northern Territory University), where I was also Dean of the Faculty of Law, Business and Arts. I now live at my parents' last home in the Sydney suburb of Mosman.

I returned to Western Australia many times after 1976, mainly for conferences and holidays. I revisited areas that I initially encountered in 1975 and 1976 and visited new places such as the Esperance, Kimberly and Pilbara regions.

Although I keep in touch with and occasionally see people I first met in Perth, many of those mentioned in my letters are now dead. Some died too young. Probably not surprisingly, I lost contact with others but while preparing this book I found out where I could what happened to them and enjoyed rediscovering some of their letters to me.¹⁶¹

Recently re-reading my own letters of 1975 and 1976 for the first time since they were written reminded me of how lucky I was to live in Perth and work at UWA when I did.

¹⁶¹ The letters include a couple of particular Western Australian historical interest in which former students vividly and in considerable detail describe their experiences and impressions as new schoolteachers in the Pilbara area during early 1977.

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