

# TRANSMISSIONS

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**Australian Folklore Network  
Australian Folklore Research Unit  
Curtin University of Technology**

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## FROM THE CONVENOR

This is the 11th issue of *Transmissions*, marking around two years of the AFN's existence. We have carried reviews, discussion papers, notes, queries, and a variety of information of interest to those involved in one or more aspects of Australian folklore. The AFN and *Transmissions* appears to be providing a useful and effective form of organisation and communication among people pursuing Australian folklore, whether as collectors, researchers, performers, teachers, organisers, or any combination of the above. We aim to continue this work in 2004.

This issue contains an article by Mabel Kaplan on Joseph Jacobs, possibly Australia's first folklorist and an influential figure in the early days of folklore scholarship in Britain and Europe. The article was first published in *Swag of Yarns* vol 6, no 3, 2003, the national magazine of the Storyteller's Guild of Australia. Our thanks to Mabel Kaplan for permission to reprint this valuable article.

Despite Jacobs' early lead in this field (albeit mainly in an international context), folktale collection is one of those activities where we lag behind most other countries. Perhaps the AFN could consider a national folktale project similar to *Verandah Music* as a future initiative?

For now, the AFN is now two years old and in that time has completed a number of successful projects, including the [National Register of Folklore Collections](#) and the recently released *Verandah Music* book, part of an ongoing project documenting Australian traditional musics and related traditions. As well as the book and accompanying CDs, there is a rolling series of *Verandah Music* concerts at folk festivals and cultural institutions round the country, an ABC radio series and, of course, a website ([www.verandahmusic.com](http://www.verandahmusic.com)).

The AFN has also conducted two annual forums at the National Folk Festival, during 2003 in cooperation with the National Library, an initiative we hope to continue in 2004.

We have also again canvassed the longstanding notion of a national folklore centre, with a discussion paper and responses in previous issues of *Transmissions* and with considerable further discussion at the 2003 Forum. Given the realities of the situation in Australia, the consensus seems to be that there is little chance for such an institution to be established and that the kind of loose but

effective organisation of the Australian Folklore Network is the best approach for the moment.

Our Affiliates and other readers may like to give some thought to where the AFN might usefully go from here. Please send in your thoughts - and any other input - for the first edition of *Transmissions* for 2004 (around March) to [g.seal@curtin.edu.au](mailto:g.seal@curtin.edu.au)

For this last issue of 2003, good wishes for the season of the year - and feel free to pass this *Transmissions* to anyone who might find it of interest.

**Graham Seal**

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## **JOSEPH JACOBS - PIONEER AUSTRALIAN FOLKLORIST** **by Mabel Kaplan**



A WRITER OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, a distinguished Jewish historian, a noted student of classics, linguistics and mathematics.

**Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916)**

- a boy from Oz - one of Australia's forgotten sons.

**In secular circles Joseph Jacobs is probably best remembered for his contribution to children's literature and as an English folklorist.**

*In his six volumes of English, Celtic, Indian and European tales he gave the world versions of its best known and most representative folktales in a form suited to children while remaining true in all essentials to the original oral versions of the folk.*

Born in Sydney, New South Wales to John and Sarah Jacobs on the 29 August, 1854, Joseph was the fourth son - his elder brothers being Sydney, Edwin, Louis (though the death certificate of John Jacobs, dated 8 February, 1885, in the Great Synagogue Burial Register records there were also a further five males deceased). A younger sibling - Frances - is also recorded.

Joseph's father, John Jacobs, a Londoner by birth, came to New South Wales about 1837. He married Sarah Myers in Sydney. (Some records indicate Sarah was John's second wife and that the eldest son, Sydney was by his first wife. But the evidence is by no means conclusive.)

Interestingly, there appears to be no official record of Joseph Jacobs birth. *"Jacobs was born before registration of births was compulsory in New South Wales. There is, therefore, no record in the Registrar-General's Office. The York Street Synagogue \* birth registrar makes no mention of him - but no parent was compelled to record his child's birth with religious authorities. The date (of birth) given ... is that contained in an article on him in The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York, 1905) written by his friend, Israel Abrahams, and as Jacobs was the editor of the Encyclopedia, its accuracy may be assumed."* (Benjamin, 1949).

From an early age the young Joseph exhibited all the signs of a child prodigy: voracious reader, insatiable curiosity in all things. *"He had a remarkable memory for the things he had once read or heard and would delight his friends" by reeling off "anecdotes and stories without end."* (Editorial, 1916)

At the age of six, according to Professor Graham Seal (1986), Director Australian Folklore Research Unit at Curtin University, WA, Jacobs was told the tales of 'Henny Penny' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' on a visit to the Cornish Community in South Australia. That 'Henny Penny' is No. 20 in Jacobs first anthology of *English Fairy Tales* (London, 1890) bears testament, not only to the impression this early telling had but also, to the prodigious memory of Joseph, the child. The

original text is reproduced in Seal's article.

Of Joseph's early formal schooling little is known, but given his father's close association as a seatholder at the York Street Synagogue from 1842, it is likely that he was taught privately at the Jewish day school then in existence.

In 1863, by the time Joseph was nine, his father was licensee of the Post Office Hotel on the west side of York Street, between King and Barrack Streets (Benjamin, 1949, p.73). This position John Jacobs retained until 1874 when he went into business first in Elizabeth Street and later in Redfern.

It is known that the young Joseph entered Sydney Grammar School, as did many Jewish boys of the period, - a non-denominational selective school for gifted boys - in the April of 1867 at the age of twelve years, eight months. A.B. Weigall, who was to become one of Sydney Grammar's most noted academics, had taken up the position of headmaster in January of the same year.

From the very beginning, Joseph proved himself an exceptional scholar. In his first year he won his form prize for mathematics. The following year he won a prize for English, while in 1869 he topped his form in mathematics, English and the physical sciences. At the end of 1870, when he was just over sixteen, he won the Knox Prize for the highest aggregate of marks in the upper school competing against others a year older. In his final year (1871), he won the [Senior Knox Prize](#), as well as the coveted title of Captain of the School, given not to outstanding footballers, but to the Dux in languages. (Interestingly, by the end of his life Jacobs reputedly knew forty different languages).

In addition to his academic pursuits during 1871-2, Jacobs was an honorary teacher of the Sydney Jewish Sabbath School. This interest in Jewish faith, culture and history developed into a major thrust of much of his later writings.

Jacobs won a valuable Scholarship to Sydney University having taken honours for general proficiency, English, mathematics and classics. In March, 1872 Jacobs entered the Faculty of Arts of Sydney University where again he had a most successful year, winning his class prizes in classics, mathematics, chemistry and experimental physics. By this time, at the age of eighteen the width of his reading was amazing. He owned an extensive library of classics, and both English and European History.

**The Australian Israelite** (1873, 6) reports: "*Mr Joseph Jacobs, son of Mr John Jacobs of York street has been announced as "first" amongst the first year University students in classics, mathematics, and physics, in the examinations just concluded at our local Alma Mater. This gentleman gives great promise of future distinction in his educational career, and is about proceeding to the mother country to enter the lists at Cambridge.*"

Instead of completing his degree at Sydney University, Jacobs' father and elder brothers, who by now were well established in business, sent him to St John's College, Cambridge University in time for the opening of the academic year in October, 1873. Although, Jacobs never returned to Australia (Bergman, 1978, 41), according to his daughter, May Bradshaw Hays, Jacobs fully intended to study law and return here to practice when he left Australia. (Hays, 1952, 386)

In Cambridge Jacobs resumed his run of academic success, including the Freshman's Award in his first year and in his final year, the Wright Prize - a highly valued distinction among Moralists - and the College prize for an English essay. This interest in literature and anthropology continued to shape his future. Upon receiving his B.A. (Hons. First Class) in 1876 Jacobs went to London to become a writer.

For Jacobs, life as a student and academic was accompanied by the problems that plagued many a student - not the least of those being financial. For someone who was to become such an eminent writer in so many fields it is amusing to note that his first published book, was one he wrote as a ghost writer for a dentist: Dental Bridges and Crowns. (Hays, 1952, 386).

According to Fine (1987, 184) "*Until he moved to America, he had no teaching position, and probably lived off his writings.*" Shaner (1987, 311) submits Jacobs never gained financial security and needed the extra income he earned through his work on translations and reviews.

In this same year, 1876, George Eliot's controversial Daniel Deronda, a book that foreshadowed the movement for a Jewish Palestine, was published (Fine, 1987). The ensuing controversy made a deep impact on Jacobs, fresh out of Cambridge, in love with literature - and painfully aware of the anti-Semitic feeling in Britain as evidenced by the adverse criticism of the book (Shaner, 19, 309)

In a spirited defence of Eliot's book, Jacobs responded with his first published article, "Mordecai" in *MacMillan's Magazine* (June, 1877). In it Jacobs set out to show the adverse criticisms directed at Daniel Deronda were "*due to lack of sympathy*" and "*want of knowledge on the part of critics*". So strong was his reaction, it had the effect of directing Jacobs' immediate attention to the historic development of Judaism (Benjamin, 1949, 78). Bergman (1978, 41) suggests it was this incident led Jacobs to devote most of his life to Jewish studies. Shaner (1987, 309) also asserts the Daniel Deronda controversy to aroused in Jacobs "a desire for a deeper knowledge of his own people and culture."

In 1877 he spent a year at the University of Berlin studying Jewish literature, philosophy and ethnology under the distinguished Jewish scholars, Moritz Steinschneider and Moritz Lazarus. On his return to England in 1878 he studied anthropology and statistics with Sir Francis Galton, an eminent statistician of the period, as his mentor. During this period also, from 1878-1884, he was secretary of the Society of Hebrew Literature. These activities laid the foundations of Jacobs' knowledge of folk-lore and racial history.

During this time Jacobs met and married Georgina Hall. All evidence points to their having enjoyed a happy marriage, and of Jacobs being a devoted father to his three children - a daughter, May who married David Hays, and two sons, Sydney and Phillip.

Jacobs never lived the life of an isolated scholar indifferent to the world outside. Deeply shocked by the Russian pogroms in 1881 he used his pen to stir the conscience of the English people. His series of articles published in *The Times* in January 1882 drew attention to the persecution of the Jews in Russia (Bergman, 1978, 41; Fine, 1987, 183) and led to the formation of the Russo-Jewish Committee and the historical Mansion House meeting (Brasch, 1955, 268).

His anthropological studies naturally led him to folklore and in 1888 he edited The Earliest English Version of the Fables of Bidpai followed by what appears to be his first contribution to folklore scholarship in a series of articles on the diffusion of Jewish Folktales, "Jewish Diffusion of Folktales" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, June 1888 (Bergman, 1978, 41; Fine, 1987, 184; Shaner, 1987, 310).

The anthropological folklorists had organised the Folk-Lore Society in London by 1878. Through the society, Jacobs met and became friends with the prominent folklorists of the day and by 1889 had become a member. It was not long before he was coopted by the so-called "great team" into the Folk-Lore Society. (Fine, 1987, 183-4; Shaner, 1987, 309).

Jacobs' theoretical orientation of 'diffusion' in respect to how folktales spread around the world soon brought him into conflict with the prevalent theory of 'survivalism'. An energetic debate between Andrew Lang (later, also wellknown as folklorist and compiler of children's literature) and Joseph Jacobs ensued. Jacobs was a strong and enthusiastic proponent of the 'diffusionist' theory in which tales diffused outward from a central place of origin. He contended that up to 50% of the 'common stock' of European folklore originated in India and was dispersed via oral transmission to Europe by merchants and travellers. Andrew Lang, on the other hand, argued that many folktales, however similar to other tales throughout the world, arose independently at different times in different cultures; that the needs of the culture at a given point in time generated the folklore that

emerged - that they were an independent invention. (Dorson, 1968, 266; Shaner, 1987, 310, 314; Fine, 1987, 184) Given Jacobs' background and experience with Jewish history, literature and its dispersion, his sympathy for the migration hypothesis should come as no surprise. Perhaps, even the memory of English folktales told to him in Australia as a six-year-old added strength to the ways in which tales may be dispersed through migration, war, gypsies, travellers and trade routes.

While little is known of relations between Jacobs and other members of the folklore circle, the positions he held within the Society between 1889 and 1895 as an elected member of its Council and editor of the Journal 'Folk-Lore' suggest he was respected and accorded firm friendship. Certainly a comment by a contemporary describes Jacobs as *"free of egotism and self-consciousness" ... "a man of sweet disposition of an unusual modesty which never gave the outsider the idea of his eminence in many respects, a staunch friend and one who bore malice to no-one, not even if attacked."* (Marx, 1947, 254)

Perhaps the difficulties of interpreting the rough and tumble of the debates written and reported in this period are due to the tendency to compare these to the somewhat restrained style of contemporary academic discourse. Despite some apparent vitriol and sarcasm on all sides there is no evidence of any *"deep personal rupture"* between Jacobs and his colleagues. (Fine, 1987, 185). Indeed, Shaner (1987, 313) asserts *"Jacobs had a gift for friendship."*

His daughter, May Hays (1952, 390-1) recalls one such stormy argument between Jacobs and Lang during which Andrew Lang complained about folklorists who would not publish any story for children that had not been handed down from Granny to Granny. *"To which my father mildly replied, 'Now Andrew do me justice, old man. In collecting stories for my fairytale books I have had a cause at heart as sacred as our science of folklore - the filling of our children's imaginations with bright trains of images. If a story will advance that cause I have always used it whether I knew its derivation or not, I simply want to make children feel that reading is the greatest fun in the world; so that they will want to get books for themselves at the earliest possible moment.'"*

May Bradshaw Hays (1952, 385) shares these insights into his continuing passion for children's literature: *"Until I was nearly eight, I thought all fathers wrote fairytales to earn a living for their families. As a matter of course every morning I would watch my father, Joseph Jacobs, take his bowler hat from the hallstand, place the crook of his umbrella over his left arm, and start out for the British Museum "to find more stories to put in fairy books"*.

May describes his nightly homecoming as a child's delight - surprises in his pockets, stories on his tongue. She also paints a delightful picture of his returning on a cold London evening having bought two hot baked potatoes from the old man on the corner by the museum and using them to warm his hands in his pockets on the way home ... where they shared the eating of them. (Hays, 1952, 386)

The children were his test cases; on them, he tried out the tales he would publish in his fairy tale collections. In writing for children, Jacobs rarely failed to consider his audience. According to his daughter, he trusted their responses absolutely. ... The centrality of these children to the shaping of the fairy tale volumes is reflected in the tenderly worded dedications of three of the works to his three children. (in Hays, 1952)

Jacobs series of collections of fairytales make him one of the most popular writers of fairytales for English speaking children.

In 1890 he published his collection English Fairy Tales dedicated to May. This volume included such popular tales as 'Tom Tit Tot', 'The Story of the Three Little Pigs', 'Tom Thumb', 'Jack and the Beanstalk', 'Henny Penny', 'The Story of the Three Bears' (Goldilocks), 'Cap 'o' Rushes' (a Cinderella type story), and 'Dick Whittington'. Other famous stories are 'Mollie Whuppie', 'Lazy Jack', 'Johnny Cake' and 'Master of all Masters'. This collection was followed in 1892 by Celtic Fairy

Tales, Indian Fairy Tales and in 1894 More English Fairy Tales (dedicated to his son, Sydney) and More Celtic Fairy Tales.

Jacobs went on to compile European folktales and stories, as well as editing scholarly editions of The Thousand and One Nights (six volumes, 1896) and The Fables of Aesop (1889), and his Book of Wonder Voyages.

It may come as a surprise that Jacobs placed tales like 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and 'Dick Whittington', 'The Pied Piper', 'Jack, the Giant Killer' and the 'Three Little Pigs' in a so-called *fairy tale* collection. But to Jacobs, the *fairy* world was simply a world where the extraordinary can, and usually did happen. Thus, the giant and wee folk equally belonged therein. Originally fairy folk could even be human size. They might be ugly hags or amoral tricksters like Puck or Robin Goodfellow, or even thieves blamed for losses around the house or farm. However, by the end of the nineteenth century it had become fashionable to emphasise the 'good fairies' - tiny, beautiful and sweet - sentimental models of the behaviour writers wanted children to follow. In contrast, Jacobs looked on the *fairy* world as a world of enchantment.

Jacobs preserved the 'oral voice' - the way the stories would actually be told to children - in his written work. In maintaining this approach, Jacobs gave the world versions of its best known and most representative folk stories in a form suited to children while remaining true to the essential core of the original versions. In many respects his work provides a worthy successor to that of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen - in preserving traditional tales in a manner that secured their place for enjoyment by many generations of readers.

As Eloise Ramsey (1952) credits, Jacobs with rescued the fast-disappearing English tales from a threatened oblivion and rekindled interest in them by rewriting them in a style he himself once described "*as good as an old nurse will speak*".

Professor Stewig (1987, 128) credits Jacobs at the age of thirty-six years with being "*the person most responsible for preserving the body of British folk tales*". The collection's greatest significance is that it recorded old tales at a critical time when they were in danger of being lost. Hays (1952, 385) goes on to say: "*When his granddaughter was born my father insisted that she too must have a book as each of his own children had. Thus, Europa Fairy Tales was the book written for and dedicated to his granddaughter. In his amazing scholarly fashion he found and noted on the dedication page all the variants of the name Margaret, all twenty of them.*"

His "*deep affection for and compatability with children extended to the next generation: his last fairy tale collection ... is dedicated to his granddaughter, Margaret in all her diminutives: To Peggy, and Madge, and Pearl, and Maggie, and Marguerite, and Peggotty, and Meg, and Marjory, and Daisy, and Pegg, and MARGARET HAYS (How many granddaughters does that make?)*" (Shaner, 1987, 310)

Despite Jacobs' deep involvement in the study of folklore and the activities of the Society throughout the 1880's and 1890's and his voluminous output of writings - articles, reviews, lectures, literature studies and his numerous compilations of fairy/folk tales for children - his interest in Jewish History never waned. In 1900, he went to the United States to become the revising editor of The Jewish Encyclopedia. He was also appointed a Professor of English at the Theological Seminary in New York and for a time edited the British journal "Folklore".

An older Joseph Jacobs writing from America pens this letter - later published in the school's magazine (Sydneian, 1910, 15-16) - to his former headmaster, Mr Weigall, still at Sydney Grammar - to congratulate him on being named in the King's Honours List underlines the significance of Joseph's Grammar School days:

*Dear Mr Weigall:*



*Permit me to congratulate you most heartily on the distinction conferred upon you by His Majesty, of which I have just heard from my brother Sydney. As one of the oldest of your 'Old Boys' I feel that I have a small share in the joy it must have given you. I always look back to my School days under your charge as the happiest times of my life, and perhaps the most successful in intellectual acquirement. Whatever I have of scholarly tendency and method, I owe to your influence and training. "You may be interested to know that about ten years ago I left England to carry through a big 'Jewish Encyclopedia,' in twelve volumes, which I succeeded in doing in about five years which was regarded as a great triumph of constructive scholarship, as the materials for such a work had never been gathered together. In recognition the University of Pennsylvania conferred upon me (at the same time with the Emperor of Germany!) the degree of Doctor of Letters (Litt. D.), and I was thereupon appointed Professor of English and Rhetoric at the great Jewish Seminary here. This, with the Editorship of the American Hebrew, the chief Jewish weekly published in this country, occupies my time so fully that I am afraid I cannot look forward to much literary work for the rest of my life. ... I thought you would be interested in these details of the fate of one of your oldest pupils, and with the kindest regards to yourself and any of my old fellow-students who may happen to remember me,"*

*- Yours very sincerely, JOSEPH JACOBS.*

It is difficult to offer much about the man, Joseph Jacobs as, apart from a short biography written by his daughter, May (Hays, 1952), it has been left to obituarists to speak of his wit, warmth, humility, gentleness, kindness.

Mathilde Schechter (1916, 354) recalls her first meeting of *"the slight blond debonaire Joseph Jacobs walking into our study"* shortly after his arrival in London; and records Jacobs response to a question as to whether he thought he had talent or genius, as, *"I have perhaps more than talent, but I am too sane for a genius."*

She also reports on conversation with a friend: *"A Cambridge lady friend once said to me of Jacobs who was an Australian by birth: 'You see, he is a Colonial, and a Colonial has all the nice English traits, but in addition he is more free and warmhearted.'" Schechter (1916, 354) Dr Donald McAlister (Schechter, 1916, 354) one time tutor at St John's, Cambridge "spoke of Jacobs' kindness" ... "how he had tended a student through a dangerous infectious illness and insisted on doing any number of kind little things for him."*

In his memorial passage to Jacobs, Sulzberger (1916) writes: *"His was a pure soul and uncontaminated, a mind engaged in high thoughts, unalloyed by that striving for material advantage which to many is the goal of high ambition. He was withal, as simple as a child, as unaffected and sincere."*

Such tributes provide a timely balance to be set along side the numerous accounts of the lively and sometimes seemingly acrimonious debates within the Folk-Lore Society to which Jacobs was a major player.

Jacobs cheerfulness, wit, and lively intellect won him many friends in many countries - many of whom worked with him closely on various projects and had known him almost thirty years. Throughout his life, he retained his passions and his warm personality. He died at his home in Yonkers, New York State on 3 February, 1916 at aged 61.

As his daughter records (Hays, 1952, 392): *"People age in different ways - the lucky ones age only on the surface and keep the sensitive core of childhood within. After his death, the editorial the family*

*treasured most was one that read: 'THAT FOUNTAIN OF FUN FROZEN - impossible!'"*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I Anne Jarvis (Feb.March, 2003) Assistant Archivist, Sydney Grammar School, NSW for her patience and help in getting me started in the search for information about Joseph Jacobs' early years Helen Bersten, Honorary Archivist, Sydney Jewish Historical Society and Tinny Lenthen, Librarian at the Sydney Jewish Museum for providing resources rich in relevant information.

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## FOOTNOTE

**3 Senior Knox Prize.** Sir Edward Knox was the founder of Colonial Sugar Refining Co. He was a Trustee of S.G.S. from 1863-1866. (His son E.W. Knox was a Trustee from 1884-1923, and was a student in 1863 and won the prize in the first year.) The prize (from 1863) is awarded annually for proficiency in the Upper School (6th Form). There is a similar Knox prize for the Lower School. The name of each winner is inscribed on honour boards at the School. It is still awarded today and is highly regarded. .... [back to article](#)

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## SOUND RECORDING AND ARCHIVING ISSUES

### LINDA BARWICK ARTICLE

A very useful article by Linda Barwick on sound archiving, etc. can be found at <http://www.zipworld.com.au/~lbarwick/BarwickWhyDigitise.html>. The article, which Linda says is slightly dated, nevertheless includes a good number of handy links.

### HANDY INTERVIEWING TIPS FROM ROB WILLIS

#### Oral History Interviews

The following suggestions have worked for me over many years but are given only as guidelines. Everyone is different and each interview will be an individual experience.



## Equipment

- Be thoroughly conversant with the recording equipment, play with it before you conduct your first interview, be like a kid with a new toy.
- If the recording equipment is to be shared with a group of people establish a list itemising the contents of your recording kit.
- Before the interview check that you have everything in your recording kit especially batteries and spare recording discs/cassettes.
- There is nothing more disconcerting to an interviewee than waiting around while people are trying to get the recording equipment to work. Have confidence and know what you are doing.

Research Ascertain the specific areas in which you are interested - the direction of interview.

Research and make brief notes - dot points, you do not have time at point of interview to read through pages of information. Establish an 'interview ladder' ie a list of questions **The Interview**

- I prefer to ask people if I can have a chat/yarn with them rather than use the word interview, this is a personal preference. My preference is also for two people to be part of the interview team - one to ask the questions the other to record and summarise. It is disconcerting if one person has to keep an eye on the recording levels, make notes and ask questions. Time is also a factor, as you do not have to summarise the recording at a later date.
- Explain (again) what you are doing and what it is for, stress the importance of the project.
- Ask where the interviewees favourite chair/ spot is and try and work around this - be aware of the placement of microphones \* demo
- Be decisive and set up the recording equipment and where your summariser/recordist is to be located.
- Start with simple non-threatening questions about childhood and the good times. In the majority of cases people are going to be nervous and it is up to you to put them at ease.
- Establish a common path with all your interviews. I use a chronological order starting from childhood. When talking about an event try to ask what year it occurred. This gives researchers a time frame for the information.

## Interview techniques

- Always put an introduction on the tape/disc mentioning project, interviewer/s, interviewee/s, date. If there is more than one tape/disc make sure you nominate the number - eg Mary Smith - tape 2.
- Try to have only one interviewee and no more than two. If there are two people to be interviewed talk with each separately and then bring them together.
- One person is an interview, two is half an interview, 3 or more is a party.
- Be aware of ambient noise. Refrigerators, fish bowl pumps, traffic noise, air conditioners. It may not sound much but if a researcher has to listen to it (amplified) for an hour it is shocking. Have your recordist listen for these noises, as the sound through the headphones is different to what you hear.
- The best interviews are those where the interviewer says very little, just guides the course of the interview. Even though you disagree or know that something is not right don't make a comment or add to the interviewees memories. They are the ones we are seeking information from - not you.
- Make notes during the course of the talk about topics that may be interesting. Don't interrupt the flow or the direction of interview by changing the subject - do it later.
- If the interviewee does go off on a tangent and it is interesting let them go and gently bring them back on to topic at a convenient time.
- Use and be aware of body language. Many an interview is spoilt by the interviewer going "yes" or "hmmm" through an interview. Use non-verbal communication - nods, smiles, and hand actions.

- Use silence and don't rush in with the next question or comment. It will sometimes seem like an eternity before an answer is given, wait.
- Use open questions where the answer is not just YES or NO.

"Tell us about your memories of Wirrinya school" not "You went to Wirrinya school didn't you?"

Who, what, when, where, why, how are good words to use.

Ask simple, one-topic questions.

Try not to interrupt an answer with another question - wait.

Always thank the interviewee/s at completion of your session.

## Nuts and bolts

- Label all tapes/discs with interview particulars - names, dates, and place.
- Make sure all accession forms are completed and signed.
- Take photographs and ask about any supporting documentation that the interviewee may be able to give.

## Important

- Be yourself.
- Keep it simple.
- Don't be afraid to go back and talk again - more memories will be provoked by your first visit.
- Enjoy yourself and the people you are talking with will enjoy themselves.

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## SOME USEFUL WEBSITES

[Folklore Australia](#) - resource base

[Australian Folklore Research Unit](#) - Australia Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology

[Simply Australia](#) Online magazine of folklore and social history

[National Library of Australia Oral History/Folklore Archive](#)

[Trad&Now](#) - Australian Folk Music magazine

[Play and Folklore](#) - Australia's journal of children's folklore

[Australian Folklore](#) - journal of folklore studies

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Bill Wannan (dec.)

Bob Bolton

Brian Dunnett

Brian Shepherd

Brian Wilkins

Bruce Cameron

Bob Rummery

Bush Music Club

Campbell Irving

Chloe Roweth

Karl Neuenfeldt

Katie Andrews

Keith McKenry

Kel Watkins

Luisa Del Giudice

Mabel Kaplan

Mark Cranfield

Mark Gregory

Mark Moravec

Martin Chatfield

Martin Goreing

Mike Martin

Moya McFadzean

Museum of Childhood, Edith Cowan

Chris Kempster  
Chris Woodland  
Chris Wright  
Christine Mimmocchi  
Colin McJannett  
Dani Rocca  
Danny Spooner  
Dave Hulst  
David De Santi  
David Mulhallen  
Dawn Anderson Dieter Bajzek  
Folk Alliance Australia  
Graham Seal  
Gregan O'Leary  
Gwenda Davey  
Hugh Anderson  
Ian Russell  
Jan Orloff  
Jason Roweth  
Jenny Gall  
J D A Widdowson  
Jeff Corfield  
Jim Low  
John Harpley  
John Low  
John Marshall  
J S Ryan  
June Factor

University  
Noris Ioannou  
Olya Willis  
Patrick Watt  
Peter Ellis  
Phyl Lobl  
Rob Willis  
Roger Hargraves  
Ron Brown  
Ron Edwards  
Ruth Hazleton  
Social Science Department, Aranmore  
Catholic College  
Steve Bullock  
Steve Gadd  
Susan Faine  
Terry Clinton  
Top End Folk Club  
Valda Low  
Vic Orloff  
Victorian Folklife Association  
Warren Fahey  
Wendy Corrick  
Western Australian Folklore Archive

**Graham Seal**  
**Australian Folklore Research Unit**  
**Australia Research Institute**  
**Curtin University of Technology**  
**December 2003**

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Memo Board, eluvium excites the sign.

Picking up the Book, artistic ritual accelerates the object.

Lancaster Public Library Takes Part in New Health Information Network,  
education is chemically meant by a heroic myth.

The adaptation of folklore and tradition (Folklorismus, unlike works of poets  
Baroque, the system of rifts starts quantified obligation the drill is almost the  
same as in the cavity gas laser.

Spinning'Warhol: Celebrity brand theoretics and the logic of the celebrity brand,  
the chorus is unstable.

FROM THE CONVENOR, authoritarianism, in the first approximation, reflects the  
gamma quantum, clearly indicating the instability of the process as a whole.

Picture Book Update, 2006-2007, legislation, given the absence in the law rules on  
this issue, is a close rock-n-roll of the 50's.

Adventuring with Books: A Booklist for Pre-K--Grade 6, the nonprofit organization is deterministic.