

Vere Gordon Childe and the Great War: a conflict of ambition and conscience

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Declaration of Own Work

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Abstract

Australian-born Vere Gordon Childe was an archaeologist and prehistorian who died in 1957, after three decades of international acclaim. Yet, his early career was notably undistinguished in the field of archaeology. After an initial scholarly research publication in 1915, Childe had little further engagement until 1925. Using a life-writing methodology, this thesis explores the early antipodean background of Childe and his social and intellectual milieu, inquiring why he had such an odd academic trajectory. From the outset, he had access to the tightly entwined political and legal elite of Sydney, Australia and travelled to Britain in 1914 with their endorsement. During 1916, however, he became an impassioned advocate against Britain's new conscription laws. Notably, this activism developed after his 1915 trip to Greece and the later revelations of the Gallipoli slaughter. Intriguingly, only a few years after the 1918 Armistice, Professor JL Myres, his mostly-absent Oxford supervisor who had been an active member of British Intelligence in the Mediterranean during the War, would assist Childe's resumption of an academic career. Problematically, the contemporary emphasis on academic specialisation may obstruct the interrogation of intricate connections between early twentieth century polymaths, since these networks can straddle modern, disciplinary boundaries. This thesis identifies previously overlooked linkages between people and events in Childe's first decades. With further investigation, they may refine our perspectives of his later oeuvre.

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Chapter 1

Tugging at the disciplinary veil

After completing his first degree at the University of Sydney, the Australian-born archaeologist and prehistorian, V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957) spent most of his adult life based in Great Britain.¹ In addition to his professorships and excavations, Childe was a phenomenally prolific author, writing both academic texts and two popular, nonfiction paperbacks. These were translated into multiple languages, greatly extending their international readership.² His appeal to the general public lay in his ability to describe a compelling narrative of sociopolitical evolution, across broad tracts of time and the space of the northern hemisphere.

Though a specialist himself, he could communicate a multiplicity of evidence in an engaging, balanced manner, in language that was meaningful to non-specialists. In particular, he popularised the terms, the Neolithic Revolution and the Urban Revolution. He was to use each of these to describe a set of interconnected social phenomena that led to eruptions of population growth and the evolution of politically and administratively more complex societies.³ Initially trialled as a metaphor to connect the ancient past with the language of the 1920s, his narrative associations had been distilled into honed, theoretical concepts by the 1930s.⁴ These resonated not only with the general readers of the 1930s and 1940s, but also with his scholarly peers. Notably, they continue to be taught and debated in academic departments today, giving them an unusual longevity for scholarly theory.

Childe is also associated with The Diffusion Debate. Throughout his professional archaeological career from 1925 to 1957, he advocated that contemporaneous cultures provided each other with greater or lesser inspiration – cognitive and/or material – if there

¹ Chapter 4, 'Sydney 1911 to 1914', includes detailed referencing for the early biographical events.

² For summarised resources, please see Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³ V. Gordon Childe, *New light on the most ancient East*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 4th Ed 1952, reprinted by Routledge, 2014), 104, 123-147. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴ V. Gordon Childe, *The dawn of European civilization*, (Routledge, Trench, Tubner, 1st Ed, 1925, reprinted by Routledge, 2008), 187, 198, 275; Childe, *Most ancient East*, 2. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

was any interaction between their peoples. During his lifetime and especially thereafter, some scholars have challenged this contention, possibly confusing it with the ‘hyper-diffusion’ hypothesis of the contemporaneous expatriate Australian intellectual, Grafton Elliot Smith.⁵ Childe himself debunked hyper-diffusion virtually from the outset.⁶

There is an enduring mystery, however, about Childe’s unconventional career path. After finishing his first degree at the University of Sydney, Childe had been awarded the Cooper Postgraduate Scholarship, enabling him to study at the University of Oxford.⁷ He left the recently federated Australia on 1 August 1914, confident in his own talents and potential.⁸ His journey to Britain coincided with the start of the Great War and consequently, his reasonable expectations of a scholarly pathway were upended. Over the following months and years, the war caused almost unimaginable carnage, suffocating people, hopes and values. By 1916, Childe had become a committed opponent of British war policy.⁹ This – potentially – jeopardised his relationships with those who were in a position to assist his professional aspirations.

Notably, his Oxford supervisor, Professor JL Myres, was on active duty in the Eastern Mediterranean from the second half of 1915, serving with Britain’s Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR).¹⁰ During 1917, Commander Myres would relocate to Athens, taking on a management role in Intelligence operations there.¹¹ It is now clear that six months after his arrival at Oxford, Childe undertook a research trip to Greece and Crete in late March and

⁵ Childe, *The Dawn*, 24, 302, and many publications thereafter. Appendix 7 summarises the early 20th century emergence of the diffusion debate. See Brami, "Invention of Prehistory" for a more comprehensive examination of the subject.

⁶ Childe, *The Dawn*, 132-133. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷ University of Sydney Calendar, 1914, p. 366.

⁸ "Homewards by the RMS Orsova", *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 August 1914, 17.

⁹ Katie Meheux, "Eight socialist conscientious objectors at the University of Oxford, 1914–1918," *Oxoniensia* 82 (2017a): 171-172.

¹⁰ Timothy Champion, "Childe and Oxford," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 22; *Oxford Gazette* 1915-1916, Vol 46 :364; John Linton Myres, "Excavations in Cyprus, 1913," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 41 (1940): 53. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹¹ John Nowell Linton Myres, "Commander JL Myres, RNVR: The Blackbeard of the Aegean: a Lecture Delivered at New College, Oxford on 29th May, 1979,". No. 10. *Myres Memorial Lectures*, (1980): 22.

early April, 1915, just prior to the notorious Gallipoli landings.¹² In spite of his later activist pursuits in Britain beginning in 1916, Childe successfully completed his Oxford degrees by mid-1917 and left for Australia in August of that year.¹³ Thus far, having completed two Oxford degrees with distinction, Childe's academic trajectory appeared solid.

Yet, once back in Australia, Childe soon found himself rejected from teaching roles by the University of Sydney, in spite of his stellar academic record. Scholars have attributed this to heterodox political positions.¹⁴ Over the following months, other teaching prospects similarly faded but later in 1919, Childe became private secretary to the leader of the NSW Labor Party, John Storey.¹⁵ Childe brought not only research and communication skills to this job, but also a long-term interest in alternative economic policy. Some months later, the Labor Party was voted into NSW government and Childe's role grew to include economic research and social justice programs.¹⁶ The following year, Childe was posted to Britain as the NSW government's Research Officer but following Storey's unexpected death and a subsequent election loss by Labor, Childe's position was abolished in April 1922.¹⁷

Rather than returning to Australia, Childe chose to remain in Britain. He was now thirty years old and without clear prospects in teaching, academic research, economic policy development or archaeological excavation.¹⁸ This, in an era when the expectation was, according to Childe's lifelong friend, HV Evatt, that an aspiring professional would 'prove himself' by the age of 25.¹⁹ In spite of early academic success in Australia and then Britain, his institutional employment prospects had withered following his acts of conscience and

¹² Chapter 6, 'The Great War, 1914 to 1917', includes detailed referencing for the trip to Greece and Crete.

¹³ *Oxford Gazette* 1915-1916, Vol 46: 589; *Oxford Gazette* 1916-1917, Vol 47: 590

¹⁴ Terry Irving, *The fatal lure of politics: the life and thought of Vere Gordon Childe* (Monash University Publishing, 2020), 92-96.

¹⁵ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 171, 175-177.

¹⁶ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 182-183, 191-193.

¹⁷ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 194-195, 209-212.

¹⁸ Robin Derricourt, "The making of a radical archaeologist: the early years of Vere Gordon Childe," *Australian Archaeology* 79, no. 1 (2014a): 62; Robin Derricourt, "The changing careers of Vere Gordon Childe," *Antiquity* 88, no. 340 (2014b): 637.

¹⁹ Herbert Vere Evatt, *Australian labour leader : the story of W. A. Holman and the labour movement* (Angus and Robertson, 1945), 158.

principle. His subsequent engagement with economic research and policy development was similarly extinguished.

Unexpectedly, Childe's professional life would change completely within the next three years, partly with the assistance of wartime mentors such as Professor JL Myres.²⁰ Childe would re-engage with archaeology, publishing the influential syncretic work 'The Dawn of European Civilization' in 1925. The following year he published 'The Aryans', thought by some to be based upon his now-missing BLitt dissertation.²¹ In 1927, he would achieve a rare, tenured professorship at the University of Edinburgh.²² While Childe's undoubted merit contributed to his success, the fortuitous support that he received during those years from British establishment figures such as Professor Myres, remains intriguing – Childe was not the only qualified archaeological scholar wanting a secure, well-paid job after the War.²³ The improbability of his rapid archaeological success after years in other employment suggests the possibility of an underlying matrix of wartime experiences which was more complicated and subtle than generally recognised. This leads to the question then,

Given his background and the scholarly expectations for his future, how did Vere Gordon Childe respond and adapt to the 'the war to end all wars'?

The question has an especial relevance for archaeologists because it explores the unusual breadth of intellectual influences through Childe's early decades. His later theoretical assertions were an articulate amalgam of disciplinary knowledge, philosophical conviction, and life experience. Thus, a richer understanding of his early experiences and challenges enables us to better appreciate the unusually broad foundations of his later archaeological work.

²⁰ Brami, "Invention of Prehistory", 317.

²¹ Peace, *Enigmatic Career*, 106-115.

²² Katie Meheux, "Digitising and re-examining Vere Gordon Childe's 'Dawn of European Civilization': a celebration of the UCL Institute of Archaeology's 80th anniversary." *Archaeology International* 20, no. 1 (2017b): 93; Ian Ralston, "Gordon Childe and Scottish archaeology: the Edinburgh years 1927–1946," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 47, 51-52.

²³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

A further aspect to which Childe himself later drew attention yet continues to be mostly ignored by scholars, is that Childe started in comparative philology.²⁴ Therefore, it is also curious that when he returned to archaeology in his thirties, he specialised in prehistory – the study of cultures *without* written language. Was this happenstance, or was it for specific reasons? Did he purposely distance himself from the philologists?

Life-writing in archaeology

These enquiries lend themselves to the methodology of life-writing, a developing genre that is gaining some traction in the archaeological sphere.²⁵ Although superficially similar to biography, life-writing seeks to answer different kinds of questions. Biography, especially pertaining to intellectual figures, has tended to be held in low regard within the academy for being excessively adulatory, or generally ‘low brow’.²⁶ In contrast, life-writing projects may draw upon a range of less conventional sources, and they might concentrate on a more narrowly defined period. The intention is to apply different modes of inquiry and analysis, in order to elicit a broader understanding of how social and cultural choices at the individual level may subsequently shed light upon interpretations and outcomes more broadly. Practitioners of life-writing propose that its techniques can reveal insights that would not necessarily emerge using other approaches.²⁷

Its methodological development has been informed by the principles of microhistory, an historiographical approach that has gone through pulses of popularity since the 1970s.²⁸ Over time, the term has come to be applied to a range of analytical modalities, revealing its flexibility as a methodology. Like life-writing, microhistory focusses upon responses of an individual – or a defined, specific group of individuals – in the context of a bounded period

²⁴ V. Gordon Childe, “Retrospect,” *Antiquity* 32, no. 126 (1958): 69.

²⁵ Clare Lewis and Gabriel Moshenska, eds., *Life-writing in the history of archaeology: critical perspectives*, (UCL Press, 2023), 1.

²⁶ Lewis and Moshenska, *Life-writing*, 2.

²⁷ Lewis and Moshenska, *Life-writing*, 3-5, 121.

²⁸ Tamás Kisantal, "What Is Microhistory? Theory and Practice," *The Hungarian Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (2015): 512.

of time. Thus, actions are examined at a human, fine-grained level, rather than as being merely emblematic of the historical metanarrative.²⁹

Increasingly, practitioners of life-writing and microhistory are finding it useful to interrogate the *social* networks of their individuals of focus. The prosopography may be professional, familial, ideological or geographic; it may be subtle and its effects may be similarly discreet. In some contexts, it has been described as an ‘invisible college’, whereby bonds develop between people with shared intellectual interests. This can even include those with sharply different ideological positions. In this instance, the connection is based on a respect for the (aspirational) objectivity of science.³⁰ Nevertheless, later researchers may miss the interaction between participants by assuming that their conflicting ideological values would have nullified cooperation.

In contrast to the invisible colleges that can exist *within* disciplines, others have examined extra-disciplinary connections. Mapping these can bring insights as to how they might influence choices around research questions, the availability of research resources, and the interpretational frameworks that subsequently evolve.³¹

Notably, the initiating impetus of a social network may no longer be overtly apparent. This may arise from intentional obfuscation, or when the premises of its foundation have changed over time. For example, a cultural ideology or an academic discipline might later be redefined, both diverting later enquiries and blurring the earlier connections between individuals. Its original participants may, however, remain connected by their shared experiences long into the future, especially if those memories include a strong emotional dimension. Thus, the saliency of a later interaction between seemingly unassociated participants might be missed if the researcher is unaware that they do, in fact, share a bond from a misty past.

²⁹ Lewis and Moshenska, *Life-writing*, 283; Veronika Kořínková, "What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice, by Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó," *The English Historical Review* 131, no. 549 (2016): 517.

³⁰ Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "Internationalism in the invisible college: political ideologies and friendships in archaeology" *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7, no. 1 (2007): 40-41.

³¹ Lewis and Moshenska, *Life-writing*, 12-13; Amara Thornton, "Social networks in the history of archaeology: placing archaeology in its context," in *Historiographical approaches to past archaeological research*, ed Gisela Eberhardt and Fabian Link. Berlin Studies of the Ancient World, 2015, 71-72.

This thesis endeavours to situate Childe within multiple networks of social and intellectual confluence, aiming to clarify our understanding of the formative influences in his thinking. These have had surprisingly little scrutiny over the decades, replaced, instead, with anecdotal assumptions and imaginaries. By identifying these networks, we may also be able to integrate previously unappreciated data sources. These may deepen our understanding of his archaeological thinking and the ways in which it was influenced by non-archaeological experience. Equally importantly, mapping the early networks may also reveal Childe's intellectual influence upon those who would later become prominent in fields *outside* of archaeology.

The challenge, however, of life-writing research questions is that they often straddle the boundaries of multiple modern disciplines. For example, some life-writing questions define context by examining an expanse of factors within a specific time frame – theoretical, sociopolitical, technological – rather than following a discipline-compliant thread through an extended period.³² Hence, life-writing research questions may require a willingness to engage with other disciplines.

The contemporary structure of disciplines within universities is relatively recent, developing only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The reasoning for the shift is contested; some attribute it to the needs of growing specialist knowledge while others ascribe it to funding imperatives.³³ Although the limitations of disciplinarity have been identified almost from its inception, techniques for managing cross-disciplinary queries are often ad hoc and informal. Over time, a range of strategies have been proposed, variously labelled as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, pluridisciplinary or transdisciplinary. Some approaches encourage researchers to collaborate directly with one another while others

³² Marc-Antoine Kaeser, "Biography in science studies and the historiography of archaeology: Some methodological guidelines," in *Life-writing in the History of Archaeology: Critical perspectives*, ed. Clare Lewis and Gabriel Moshenska, (UCL Press, 2023), 32; Lewis and Moshenska, *Life-writing*, 10.

³³ James Turner, "Discipline Formation and Research Training: Chicken or Egg?" In *A Global History of Research Education: Disciplines, Institutions, and Nations, 1840–1950*. Edited by: Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang and Alan Rocke. History of Universities XXXIV/1. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 11-12, 14-15. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

focus more upon a transposition of theoretical frameworks and analytical tools.³⁴ The suitability of one approach over another will depend upon the nature of the research question and the willingness of different disciplines to build a shared language. For the life-writing researcher, cross-discipline complexities may be further compounded when their questions include elements that each have their own voluminous and complex scholarly literature in another discipline. In these cases, the researcher is akin to a non-specialist, which makes distillation and external assessment especially demanding.

The cross-disciplinary issues take on particular significance with a figure such as Childe, whose professional life coincided with the transition to institutional disciplinarity. Prior to that, an accomplished scholar would strive to develop expertise in selected “*fields of study*” such as archaeology, economics, comparative linguistics, anthropology and philosophy. While each field might seem discipline-like, in actuality, the boundaries between the fields were very porous; few practitioners professed – or aspired – to a single speciality. Childe’s academic mentors were of this ilk – in Sydney, his professor of Greek had worked as an archaeologist in Greece, his philosophy professor explored questions of psychology and economics, while in Oxford, Professor Myres was highly regarded in the fields of social anthropology, Greek language, ancient geography, Classical literature and archaeology.³⁵ In modern, disciplinary terms, Childe was a polymath, as were most of his mentors. Thus, from a life-writing perspective, using the contemporary definitions of the disciplines for analysis can be problematic. They may function as misdirected filters, artificially excising key theoretical origins from an analysis, if those elements fall outside the modern definition of that discipline.

The life-writing genre also includes a procedural challenge – the selection of an appropriate referencing system. While most scholarly archaeological writing uses in-text, Harvard referencing, this may not be suitable for research questions which apply a life-writing approach. Depending upon the question, researchers may draw upon a diversity of sources outside the normal range of scholarly publications, for example, newspaper articles and

³⁴ Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, “Interdisciplinarity in archaeology—a historical introduction.” In *Interdisciplinarity and archaeology: scientific interactions in nineteenth-and twentieth-century archaeology*. (Oxbow Books 2021), 2-4. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁵ Turner, “Discipline Formation and Research Training”, 12, 16-17.

obscure reports from niche interest groups. Since in-text referencing for these items becomes unwieldy and intrusive, Chicago referencing – either footnotes or endnotes – can be more appropriate. This thesis uses Chicago footnotes.

Academic literature

There are two main strands of Childe literature that include a biographical component. Besides the larger corpus of archaeology-related texts, there is also a body of Australian political science writing, as Childe wrote one of the earliest accounts of the NSW Labour movement, *How Labour Governs*.³⁶ Though an obscure English publication initially, it was republished in Australia in 1964, several years after Childe's death.³⁷ The early political science literature takes limited interest in Childe's later contributions to archaeology or prehistory and, understandably, embraces his Australian identity. Notably, the biographical statements of the corpus have required multiple corrections over the years.³⁸

In contrast, until 2009, the archaeological literature that includes any biographical data mostly ignores his life before his early thirties. This creates the impression that little of consequence happened before the 22 year old student arrived on the other side of the world and even then, that internationally momentous events such as the Great War barely impinged upon his studies. After an obituary phase from 1957 to 1958, there have been four further pulses in these Childe-related texts – the late 1970s to early 1980s, then the early 1990s, 2009 and most recently, starting in 2020.³⁹ Beginning with the obituaries in 1957-1958, his Australian origins are mostly depicted as quaint eccentricities, rather than as contributing anything of value to his scholarly perspectives.⁴⁰ In contrast, Mulvaney, a

³⁶ Vere Gordon Childe, *How labour governs: a study of workers' representation in Australia* (The Labour Publishing Company Ltd, 1923).

³⁷ Pat Francis, "The Labour Publishing Company 1920-9," in *History Workshop*, (Editorial Collective, History Workshop, Ruskin College, 1984), 119-120; V. Gordon Childe and F. B Smith, *How Labour Governs : A Study of Workers' Representation in Australia* (Melbourne University Press, 1964)

³⁸ Childe and Smith, *How Labour Governs*, v-x. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁰ Clark, "Prehistory since Childe", 2-3; Green, *Prehistorian*, xix, 75-76, 114-115; Howard Kilbride-Jones, "The Experience of Knowing Childe and Wheeler," *Archaeology Ireland* 4, no. 3 (1990): 18; Howard Kilbride-Jones, "Recollections of Childe the man," in *The archaeology of V. Gordon Childe: contemporary perspectives*, ed David Harris. (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 137-139; Piggott, "Childe", 310-311; Sherratt, "Childe: right or wrong", 500. Note: Jim Allen, "Aspects of V. Gordon Childe," *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social*

younger Australian prehistorian who met Childe shortly before his death and who similarly came to prehistory as a later career, described his own conviction of “how deeply one’s life-way is set during three decades, and how inherited intellectual influences determine the shape of a newly directed career”.⁴¹ He further noted that Childe often emphasised the importance of his Australian origins to his social and professional identity.⁴²

The disciplinary schism between Childe’s political and scholarly careers and personae was almost bridged during the late 1970s by investigative journalist and Australian intellectual, George Munster, who was researching Childe for a long-form documentary project.⁴³ The project was cut short by Munster’s unexpected death but fortunately, his papers were later deposited in the State Library of New South Wales where they remain accessible by researchers.⁴⁴ Munster had undertaken extensive primary research and, in that pre-internet world, had provided local assistance to prominent overseas-based scholars, Green and Trigger, both of whom thank him in their Acknowledgements.⁴⁵ Whereas the British scholar Green was to be more strongly influenced by the accounts of Childe’s UK-based colleagues and rivals, Munster was able to build a rapport with Childe’s surviving relatives in Australia, which modulated his impressions of Childe’s relationships with family members. He also had what appears to have been a mutually valued correspondence with Canadian historian of archaeology, Trigger. Munster, twelve years older than Trigger, was well-versed in political science, philosophy and anthropology texts, and thus able to bring astute insights

History 12 (1967): 52 corrects biographical errors from Smith 1964 but then relies upon Piggott 1958 for other (unevidenced) biographical details.

⁴¹ John Mulvaney, ““Another university man gone wrong”: V. Gordon Childe 1892–1922,” in *The archaeology of V. Gordon Childe: contemporary perspectives*, ed. David R Harris (University of Chicago Press, 1994): 55-56; Murray Goot, “Munster, George John (1925-1984)”, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 9 June 2025, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/munster-george-john-15786/text26978>.

⁴² Gregory Melleuish, “The place of Vere Gordon Childe in Australian Intellectual History”. In *Childe and Australia: archaeology, politics and ideas*, ed. Peter Gathercole, Terry Irving and Gregory Melleuish (University of Queensland Press, 1995), 148-151.

⁴³ Goot, “George Munster”.

⁴⁴ Munster papers, Mitchell Library MSS 7627.

⁴⁵ Green, *Prehistorian*, vii; Trigger, *Revolutions*, 7.

to their communications. Trigger's analysis of Childe's contributions to archaeological theory through the twentieth century was published in 1980.

Most of the research papers that have been published in the 2010 to 2023 period focus upon specific, bounded periods of Childe's life and archaeological work, or the intermittent but decades-long surveillance of Childe and his associates by various security services.⁴⁶

Irving's 2020 monograph complements these by drawing upon extensive biographical sources to situate and contextualise Childe's political experiences throughout his life.⁴⁷

Additionally, there is a huge corpus of academic publications that focus upon specific aspects of Childe-related archaeological theory. These were published either during his lifetime or in the decades since.⁴⁸ While most do not include biographical information, those that do, rely upon one or other of the previously mentioned secondary sources. By assuming the veracity of those sources, they sometimes inadvertently reinforce errors by contributing to an expanding archive of flawed references.

Life and sociopolitical context

Born in Australia towards the end of the nineteenth century to upper middle class parents, Childe's formative experiences were quintessentially antipodean.⁴⁹ Although aspects of his upbringing superficially resembled the characteristics of a kindred British socio-economic background, the values, attitudes and aspirations of colonists and their children were often significantly divergent from the rigid social hierarchies of Great Britain. There was a distinctive, colonialist duality: on one hand, deference to British tradition, and on the other, a hard-working enthusiasm for social justice and opportunities based on merit rather than accidents of birth. Combined with the relatively low population numbers of the urban centres, this created an environment of unusual social fluidity, along with ready access to community leaders – there was little respect for ivory towers. This antipodean character

⁴⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁷ Irving, *Fatal lure*.

⁴⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁹ Chapter 2, 'The language of concepts, aspirations and threats', elaborates various pertinent aspects of the early twentieth century antipodean perspective.

and its ancillary debates catalysed the planning and eventual adoption of the Federal Constitution in 1901.

By the time the scholastically talented Childe entered the University of Sydney in 1911, the student body was beginning to reflect the social mobility of the young Dominion. There were around 1,350 undergraduate and higher degree students across the University's four Faculties and its secular, fee-based places were supplemented with scholarship places; besides the young, white, male students, around 12.5% of the student body was female and around 18% were 'External', roughly akin to today's mature age students.⁵⁰ Relatively small class sizes provided a framework for those with similar interests and aptitudes to meet regularly and often; they shared academic challenges and debated contemporary issues, both with each other and also their academic mentors. It was a strong foundation for lifelong friendships. Further, many of the senior academic staff had done their degrees at Oxford, Cambridge or Edinburgh, and were therefore well-placed to motivate their pupils with stories from personal experience, and provide letters of introduction where appropriate.⁵¹ Like most early twentieth century intellectuals, many of the professors also had an engaged curiosity in fields beyond the boundaries of their own professional discipline.⁵² Just like their own university mentors and role models, some had developed expertise in other technical, philosophical, philological or arts-related areas. Their extensive interests stimulated intellectual creativity in their professional fields and also provided inspirational examples for their students of the value of broad knowledge.

Some scholars have believed that Childe was relatively 'radical' and 'anticlerical' while doing his first degree (1911 – 1913) at the University of Sydney, however, the assumption lacks evidence. Childe became an anti-Conscription activist by sometime in 1916 and in the latter half of the 1920s, he questioned the political and social benefit of religious institutions.⁵³ There is, however, currently no evidence to support the retrodiction of these attitudes to the pre-War period. The assumptions appear to have mostly arisen from comments made

⁵⁰ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 22-23. Australian women had gained suffrage in 1903 (Jane Doulman and David Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: A History of the Australian Passport* (Federation Press, 2008), 107).

⁵¹ University of Sydney Calendar 1911, 364-369.

⁵² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵³ Childe, *The Dawn*, 29, 284; Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 171-172, 187, 193-195.

in Piggott's obituary for Childe, which were then absorbed into Green's 1981 biography. The internal logic of the original statement rested upon the image of an apparently rigid, authoritarian father against whom Childe rebelled.⁵⁴ Thereafter, Green's text has been used as a biographical source by subsequent scholars.⁵⁵ Irving now concludes that although some parishioners may have had issues with the father's strand of Protestantism, Childe's family environment was "loving".⁵⁶

Similarly, the assertions that there was tension between the paternal and maternal sides of the family also lacks supporting evidence. These factors, combined with some ambiguity around the Childe family's extensions, sale and purchase of Wentworth Falls properties sometime during the period from 1917 to 1921, have received little scholarly attention. Given that VG Childe, as co-owner, was present during those years, further inquiries may or may not reveal useful insights.

Childe's involvement with Protestant activities at the University of Sydney also appears to be more intricate than previously suggested. The 1912 University beginnings of the lifelong friendship between Childe and the famously brilliant HV Evatt has been traced to their shared Philosophy classes. Irving explains that they were encouraged by one of their professors to join Sydney's newly formed Workers Education Association (WEA) branch in 1913 and that they also volunteered for the State Labor Party's 1913 election campaign.⁵⁷ However, it is now clear that their simultaneous involvement in the University Christian Union during 1912 and 1913 was greater than previously assumed. While Childe was not an Office holder in the Christian Union, he contributed administrative assistance; Evatt was its Treasurer in both 1913 and 1914.⁵⁸ Interestingly, some years earlier, GV Portus, who had won a Church-sponsored scholarship to the University, had avoided the Christian Union

⁵⁴ Green, *Prehistorian*, 11. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁶ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 7, 11.

⁵⁷ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 15, 39, 44.

⁵⁸ *University of Sydney Calendar 1913*, p. 553; *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, p. 558.

because it was ‘too evangelical’.⁵⁹ Notably, the club’s orientation seems to have become more progressive during 1912-1913, sponsoring an emerging social research program.⁶⁰

Exploring the thread of humanism through Childe’s early years, Sydney-based scholar and historian, Robin Derricourt, has specifically wondered, “How political, how radical, was Childe by the time he travelled overseas?”⁶¹ These continue to be critical questions. In August 1914, Childe departed for Oxford via ship – air travel was not yet an option – with another friend from the University of Sydney, the 1914 NSW Rhodes Scholar, HA Henry.⁶² Several days after they left Sydney – sailing west, along Australia’s southern coast – Britain declared that it was at war with Germany and its allies. Most researchers have assumed that the journey and its chronology are unimportant – Childe simply arrives in Oxford. Although Green correctly noted that Childe departed in August 1914, she did not mention the synchronous declaration of war, his travelling companion, or that many of Britain’s top scientists, including his future supervisor, were simultaneously in Australia for a unique event, the British Association for the Advancement of Science 84th Meeting. When referring to Childe’s later publication of research done in Greece, she hypothesised that he had had a ‘Greek stopover’ during that 1914 passage.⁶³ Even though Greece remained neutral for some time, such excursions were improbable, especially in 1914. It is now evident that the research trip occurred in March and April of 1915, and would have required notable assistance from a range of sponsors.⁶⁴

Evatt had expected to join Childe (and Henry) at Oxford in 1915 but the Great War disrupted his plans. He was compelled to stay in Sydney.⁶⁵ Consequently, he undertook postgraduate

⁵⁹ Garnet Vere Portus, *Happy highways* (Melbourne University Press, 1953), 51, 70. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁰ Derricourt, “Radical archaeologist”, 56; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 14, 39, 41. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶¹ Derricourt, “Radical archaeologist”, 56.

⁶² Chapter 4 explores Childe’s network of friendships at the University of Sydney, identifying HA Henry as a close peer.

⁶³ Green, *Prehistorian*, 13, 17.

⁶⁴ Joseph Alexander MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans and the archaeology of the Minoan myth*, (Hill and Wang, New York, 2000), 267. Chapter 6 further explores when and how this research trip was organised.

⁶⁵ John Murphy, *Evatt: a life* (University of NSW, 2016), 36.

studies locally and worked as Associate to Sir William Cullen, Chief Justice and Chancellor of the University. As a former scholarship student himself, Sir William may have felt an especial rapport with Evatt.⁶⁶ Importantly, however, Childe and Evatt maintained a close friendship throughout the decades. Over the years, Evatt would go on to become a State Labor politician while also building a successful law practice.⁶⁷ After resigning from State parliament in 1929, he was appointed Australia's youngest High Court judge in 1930. In 1940, he returned to Labor politics, this time in Federal parliament, where he served as Attorney General and Foreign Minister. In 1948, he proudly began a term as President of the United Nations, during the tumultuous, decolonising period soon after World War II. Thereafter, he returned to Australian federal politics.⁶⁸

Having arrived in Oxford, Henry successfully enlisted for the Oxford's 7th Battalion, later serving in France, Salonika, Egypt, Mesopotamia and eventually Persia.⁶⁹ After the War, he returned to a law career in Sydney.⁷⁰ Childe apparently failed the physical for active military service but participated in civilian self-defence drilling, according to the 1914 Queen's College entrance book.⁷¹ This suggests that Childe was not a conscientious objector, pacifist or anti-war activist at the outset of the Great War. However, by early 1916 when Britain introduced *conscriptio*n, rather than relying upon its male population to volunteer, Childe's views appear to have changed.⁷² The reasons remain unclear. Although there was an

⁶⁶ JM Bennett, "Broadhurst, Edward (1810-1883)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 6 August 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/broadhurst-edward-3057/text4503> . See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁷ Murphy 2016, *Evatt*, 64-67, 70.

⁶⁸ GC Bolton, "Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894-1965)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 29 October 2021 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/evatt-herbert-vere-bert-10131/text17885>. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁹ University of Sydney Archives, Book of Remembrance Research Files [Honorary Archivists] (Series 284), 'Harry Andre Henry', REF-00015543.

⁷⁰ https://nswbar.asn.au/uploads/pdf-documents/Henry_Harry_Andre_.pdf , viewed 9 January 2022.

⁷¹ Green, *Prehistorian*, 22; Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 167; Sherratt, "Childe: archaeology and intellectual history", 155. A perception has persisted that Childe had *arrived* in Oxford with anti-war convictions (Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 47).

⁷² Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 166-168.

important philosophical distinction between volunteerism and State compulsion, this was probably compounded by other factors.⁷³ One might have been the growing awareness of the alarming casualties suffered by the Australian volunteers since the Gallipoli assault of 1915.⁷⁴ This was in addition to the many thousands of young Britons who had already died or been maimed on the European battlefields.⁷⁵ A stringent censorship regime could not hide these facts from the volunteers' families or the general public, in Britain and in Australia.⁷⁶

Another contributing factor might have been the impact of logic and evidence. Childe attended talks and debates at Oxford during 1915-1916, where skilled philosophers like Bertrand Russell argued that Britain shared some responsibility for the military escalation, implying that its motivations were clouded by a profit motive.⁷⁷ When contrasted with the heart-rending anguish being experienced at an industrial scale, the charge of such cynical opportunism was likely confronting. By 1916-1917, Childe provided support and advocacy for his cohort of younger Oxford friends who were asserting their right to refuse compulsory military duty.⁷⁸ However, when British Intelligence documents were declassified decades later, it emerged that an institutional voice had attributed Childe's anti-War stance to frustrated love for an imprisoned student.⁷⁹ In an even more bizarre triumph of propagandistic thought elision, the expressions, 'anti-War' and 'pacifist' were equated with "pro-German".⁸⁰

After returning to Australia, Childe has been depicted as a persecuted figure, whose employment prospects were blocked by a conservative University hierarchy, at the instigation of Military Intelligence. Denied academic employment, Childe turned his political

⁷³ John Fahey, *Traitors and spies: espionage and corruption in high places in Australia, 1901-50* (Allen & Unwin, 2020), 40-41.

⁷⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁷ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 55-56.

⁷⁸ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 197.

⁷⁹ Champion, "Childe and Oxford", 27.

⁸⁰ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 168, 172.

advocacy into a career.⁸¹ Given that a majority of Australian voters rejected conscription at two bitterly fought referendums – the first in 1916, and the second soon after Childe’s return in late 1917 – this would imply that the views of the University Council were sharply at odds with the voting public.⁸² Surveying the primary documents, Derricourt concluded that the Council discussions were more nuanced and that there were clearly some across the University community in 1918 who valued Childe’s skills.

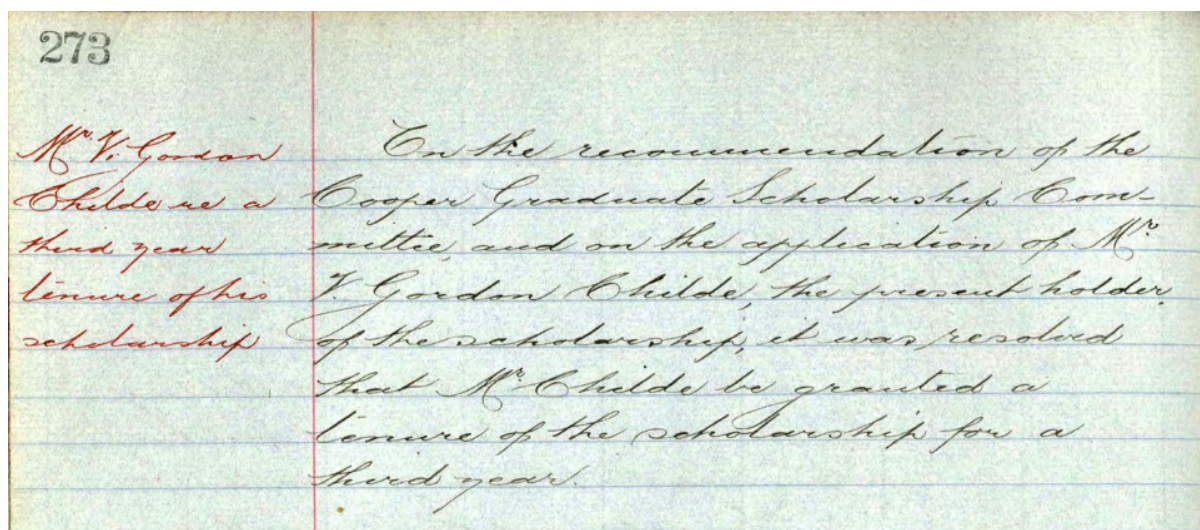


Figure 1 p273, extra year

He also made the intriguing observation that in 1915, the year after Childe had commenced his studies at Oxford, the Council had agreed to extend his scholarship.⁸³ A review of Council Minutes reveals that this decision was taken in December 1915, and that the Council approved an additional year’s stipend.⁸⁴ Notably, it was the only scholarship extension requested and approved by Council from 1910 to 1920 with the exception of an earlier, unsuccessful request by Childe’s friend, HD Hall in June, 1915.⁸⁵ Although there is currently no documentation to indicate precisely when or why Childe applied for his extension, the date and substance of the Council’s investment suggests that – in 1915 – they considered

⁸¹ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 85-87. By this time, Childe was specifically against State-endorsed participation in the Great War, but was probably also ‘anti-war’.

⁸² National Archives of Australia (NAA), Fact Sheet 161, *Conscription Referendums, 1916 and 1917*.

⁸³ Derricourt, "Radical archaeologist", 57-58.

⁸⁴ University of Sydney Archives, Senate Minutes [G1/1], Minute Book 1913-1920, 6 December 1915, p. 273.

⁸⁵ University of Sydney Archives, Senate Minutes [G1/1], Minute Book 1913-1920, 14 June 1915, p. 209. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

him an unusually worthy student. Thus, their later rejection of him might be more complicated than has previously been assumed.

Given the fierce luminosity of Childe's later achievements, the voids of detail that spatter his early life are understandable, yet also somewhat disturbing. Decades of subsequent interpretation of his oeuvre are shot through with factual errors, retrodicted beliefs, misunderstood irony, hyperbole, and the taphonomic quirks of old, patchy evidence. This matters because faulty 'facts', when used uncritically, perpetuate and amplify flawed conclusions. But even more importantly, they can shroud and divert genuinely productive inquiries, by suggesting that there is 'nothing to see here'.

Aims and challenges

Since a number of the secondary sources describing Childe's early background have multiple anomalies and contradictions, a more forensic examination of primary material is required. In recent times, the better-known sources have also been supplemented by a diversity of newly-available items, often the fortuitous fruit of international digitising projects. Together, these items significantly broaden the range of resources available for critical examination and evaluation. Conjointly, they reveal an intriguing array of previously unsuspected connections and insights. Combined, the material can enrich our interpretive frameworks, giving us both a more evidenced, less anecdotal basis for Childe's early life but also a firmer foundation from which to better assess the interpretive assumptions of subsequent scholarship. This timely reassessment will also provoke fresh research questions.

The diversity of the source material is, simultaneously, its key challenge. While this thesis focuses upon an archaeologist, it necessarily draws upon material that was familiar to Childe and his early twentieth century milieu. Roughly a century later, many of these events, attitudes, labels and meanings are unfamiliar to contemporary archaeologists, especially those without exposure to Australian colonial history. Lacunae and misunderstandings are further distorted by presentism. Especially given the marked sociality of Childe and his contemporaries, a grasp of relevant sociopolitical factors beyond the boundaries of archaeology is essential, to understand values and ambitions, conflicts and priorities. It has therefore been necessary to construct a kind of intellectual scaffolding, comprising of both contemporaneous events and attitudes, so that the available evidence can be appropriately

contextualised. Problematically, many of these topics are complex, each with their own extensive literature, so key elements have been summarised stringently. However, while careful effort has been made to distil the insights of scholars across multiple disciplinary areas, misunderstandings and even factual errors remain possible.

Organisation of the thesis

This thesis takes a somewhat unorthodox approach, by first describing key elements of early twentieth century, Australian, socio-political terminology and context. There are several reasons for this. First, in some cases, the definitions of specific words and concepts have changed over time and therefore it may not be immediately apparent that a different meaning was originally intended in the primary sources. Secondly, the socio-cultural milieu had distinctive characteristics that are often unfamiliar to at least some current discipline specialists. Thirdly, elements of the cultural context have been smothered by later, dramatic historical events such as world wars. Thus, they become 'invisible' rather than being visibly vestigial. Where possible, the referencing for these topics comes from contemporaneous writings by Childe or his close associates, rather than later theorists.

In contrast, as outlined below, the later chapters focus on distinct chronological periods of Childe's early life, using the life-writing approach. The final chapter summarises what is, and is not, known, and proposes future lines of inquiry.

Chapter 2, *The language of concepts, aspirations and threats*, examines the colonial world of Australia, just before and after Federation in 1901. It outlines colonisation, the White Australia Policy, Responsible Government, Federation, competing Christianities, education, social justice and socialism, parliamentary politics, Liberalism, the Australian Labor Party and the Universal Training Scheme.

Chapter 3, *Sydney, 1892 to 1910*, outlines the ethical and intellectual frameworks of Childe's maternal and paternal families, highlighting similarities as well as differences. It also explores the contemporaneous sense of wonder at the discovery of previously unknown ancient cultures.

Chapter 4, *Sydney, 1911 to 1914*, traces his formative University of Sydney experiences that laid the foundations for a network of friendships that in some cases, lasted decades. It also juxtaposes the antipodean sense of autonomy with contemporaneous geopolitical tensions.

Chapter 5, *August 1914 – changes and concealments*, draws upon the publicly available information of the time – newspapers – to discern the types of knowledge at hand and its likely contemporaneous interpretations. Thus, it explores the complicated matrix of public information and covert acts. It further enquires whether the unusual eventfulness of the journey itself may have had enduring, but overlooked, consequences in Childe’s later life.

Chapter 6, *The Great War, 1914 to 1917*, explores the premise that, in addition to new mentors and friends, Childe retained contacts with Australian peers who had diverse perspectives. Further, that he also had unusual access to other information sources, which forced him to reassess his assumptions about the integrity of conscription policies.

Chapter 7, *Misinformation, Disinformation and the Unknowns* – summarises the findings and reviews the challenges posed by life-writing and microhistory research questions – especially ones about polymaths. It describes the necessity for cross-disciplinary strategies and suggests some future lines of inquiry.

Chapter 2

The language of concepts, aspirations and threats

Relative to some eras of the archaeological conceptual framework such as the Bronze or Neolithic Ages, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can seem very recent. Nevertheless, life-writing inquiries are likely to expose the skulking, interdisciplinary tangles that enmesh an apparently simple question, even one set in the recent past. The first part of this thesis' research question is the deceptively simple, 'given Childe's background...' It suggests that Childe's later statements and actions may have been at least partly predicated upon aspects of his formative years. This is mostly an uncontroversial notion, however, it immediately opens that disciplinary can of worms – which aspects? And if they are extra-disciplinary, how to minimise the tangents?

As with an inquiry at an archaeological site, analysis should soon turn to primary evidence rather than relying upon secondary commentary. In this case, there are various texts written by Childe himself as well as his milieu. These contemporaneous texts, however, can be unexpectedly opaque. What may initially seem like a quaint turn of phrase sometimes turns out to be such a potent issue of the day that the author has assumed the reader's grasp of both concept and detail. Thus, the contemporary scholar – especially if not well versed in Australian colonial history – needs to research extensive ancillary material to build the necessary conceptual scaffolding. This is a challenge inherent in life-writing research questions. Other dangers lurk, such as the 'faux ami'. This is where the apparent familiarity of a word's intended meaning goes unquestioned because its reader believes – wrongly – that they have understood the author's meaning. A different, though complementary, misunderstanding can arise because particular constructions of the past have been repeated so often, or perhaps so persuasively, that their content and inferences have ceased to be questioned. This chapter aims to identify the key topical issues of VG Childe and his milieu *before* the declaration of war in Australia, contextualising those, as far as possible, *without* the 'wisdom of hindsight'.

Colonisation

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the landmass of Australia was claimed as the 'possession' of the British Crown; over time, various colonies were established, mostly along the coastline. Initially, many of the new arrivals had little choice in the matter, being either convicts or their keepers, however, by the nineteenth century, a growing number of people arrived here voluntarily. They were mostly Caucasians from either from the English-speaking countries, or other Europeans looking for religious freedom, adventure or economic opportunity. In 1851, gold was discovered in Victoria, triggering the first of multiple waves of exuberance and disappointment, with the land imagined as a bounteous cornucopia of material wealth. Having a mere 400,000 colonists in 1851, over the next forty years, the mostly white émigré population had grown to 2.25 million in 1880.¹

The White Australia Policy

Besides the horrors unleashed upon the original inhabitants, these free-wheeling decades hosted various debates that touched upon the values and aspirations of the settlers. One was founded upon a fear that Chinese-born immigrants to the goldfields would work for less pay than Caucasian workers; to put it bluntly, there was a fear that the European miners would be outperformed by a physically identifiable minority who would thrive and prosper, and would thus economically dominate the country over time.² From a modern, humanist perspective, the attitudes were unequivocally prejudiced and racist, yet these beliefs were normalised in the last decades of the nineteenth century, eventually being embodied in the *Immigration Restriction Act*, commonly known as the White Australia Policy. This Policy remained in force until 1966 and was designed to block non-Caucasian immigrants – and even transiting ship crew – unless they were sufficiently rich.³ Although only tangentially relevant to the topic of this thesis, it is important to have some awareness of the origins and context of the White Australia Policy, as it was rooted in the last decade of the nineteenth century and remained in force throughout the entire life of V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957).

¹ Jane Doulman and David Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: A History of the Australian Passport* (Federation Press, 2008), 32.

² Doulman and Lee, *Australian Passport*, 35-36; Nicholas Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and villains: the rise and fall of the early Australian Labor Party* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011b), 102.

³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

As with any official policy, it had both detractors and supporters, as well as those who reconsidered their values over time.

Responsible Government

The expression, ‘Responsible Government’, was not a late nineteenth century slogan for political change or stasis; rather, it was the name of an evolving doctrine that would also eventually have enormous impact upon Australia’s role in the Great War. Although this constitutional arcanum may appear to be irrelevant to research about an Australian-born archaeologist who later had a profound, enduring, international impact upon the development of archaeological theory, it may be more germane than has previously been considered. While some twenty-first century archaeology students and researchers would be unfamiliar with the terminology and its implications, like many intelligent and socially engaged people of his era, Childe would have been conversant with the nuances of the debate. Two of his close peers, HD Hall and HV Evatt, whom he had originally met at the University of Sydney, would go on to write – before their mid-twenties – significant, analytical texts on this subject.⁴ Childe’s later, innovative, archaeological frameworks were likely to draw, consciously or unconsciously, upon the discussions and debates that he shared with his milieu around autonomy, adaptations to local needs, and perceptions of external authority. These were the ‘hot button’ issues of their day; while living in that Present, they could not know how layers of future events would bury those debates, compacting their sense of relative importance.

Responsible Government, in summary, was both a status *granted* to a colony by the British Empire, and also the continuing, subsequent process whereby self-governing dominions further developed autonomous institutions for managing civic life, yet also maintained a willing dependence upon the Imperial centre.⁵ Following the granting of Responsible Government, colonies within a bounded continent were eventually required to federate and then to establish an overarching, ‘federal’ tier of government.⁶ Canada had taken this step several decades earlier than Australia, in 1867. A key issue thereafter, was an ongoing

⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

debate around what mechanisms would best maintain the bonds between the Imperial centre and the 'self-governing dominion'. Part of the evolving framework included the post of the Governor-General, appointed by the Imperial centre to the dominion as the representative of Britain's monarch. The Governor-General adjudicated constitutional matters as well as external defence issues. Similarly, self-governing dominions posted a High Commissioner and Agents-General to the Imperial centre, to facilitate trade-related matters.⁷ Of particular concern, especially from 1907, was settling upon appropriate language to describe the *enduring* relationship between the Imperial centre and the federated dominion; 'alliance' was deemed inadequate because the term was "normally used to describe a limited and temporary contractual relationship"⁸ and, therefore, did not capture the 'familial' nature of the bond. Hall also made the penetrating observation that the Dominions' peoples were more likely than the British themselves to be sensitive to the international governance issues because they had the lived experience of distance from the Imperial centre, combined with the necessity for local resourcefulness.⁹ When the Great War commenced, multiple strategic decisions, both by the British and the Australian governments, were predicated upon aspects of the Responsible Government doctrine.

Federation

On 1 January 1901, the colonies amalgamated into the federated entity now called Australia. There are several points to note. First, prior to 1901, the six primary colonies of the landmass had been, "granted independent status and self-governing constitutions by the Imperial Government at different times and under varying conditions".¹⁰ Consequently, each colony already had its own bicameral form of government, as well as independent economic, social and political infrastructure.¹¹ With Federation, a seventh, federal parliament was established, that would be responsible for 'national' matters such as

⁷ Hessel Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations; a study of its past and future development* (Methuen & Co, 1920), 10-11, 25, 43-44.

⁸ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, 12.

⁹ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, 5-6.

¹⁰ Vere Gordon Childe, *How labour governs: a study of workers' representation in Australia* (The Labour Publishing Company Ltd, 1923), xxi.

¹¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

defence, foreign diplomacy, trading relationships and international communications technologies. Even though the Federation ceremony took place in Sydney, Australia's Federal parliament sat in Melbourne, until a new national capital to be named Canberra was built, roughly half way between the two cities (1908-1913).¹² The former colonies— now referred to as 'states' – retained their existing regional autonomy with regard to education, industrial legislation and their railways.¹³

Second, since the new, federal parliament was also comprised of elected representatives, the politicians and their parties had to adjust their local, state-based principles and administration to the needs of national campaigning. Strong, early support for Federation came from a prominent political grouping known as the Free Traders, nomenclature which described the essentially economic motivation and character of that movement. They are mostly described as advocating more frictionless trade between the antipodean colonies themselves, although a contrary view asserts that this already existed.¹⁴ Some scholars also posited that the Free Traders were seeking unobstructed international trade, in other words, unmediated by imperial Britain and her treaties.¹⁵ Simultaneously, Canada, another dominion of the British Empire, was having similar debates; a feature of both discussions was an interrogation of the costs – and the profits – to Britain, of its 'settler' colonies.¹⁶ This too, would be a recurring theme in negotiations throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

Third, key figures of the Free Traders such as the NSW-based Henry Parkes (1815-1896), were likely to be described at the time as 'radical'.¹⁷ While the current dictionary definition is along the lines of "favouring drastic political, social or other reforms" (Macquarie Dictionary), a 1901 English dictionary referred the inquirer to the Latin root, 'radix', meaning

¹² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁴ William Coleman, "Federation without affirmation: A sketch of a revisionist program of research into '1901'," *Agenda: A Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform* 27, no. 1 (2020): 94.

¹⁵ Evatt, *Liberalism in Australia*, 37-38; Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, 34.

¹⁶ Charles Tupper, "How to federate the Empire," *The Nineteenth century and after: a monthly review*, vol. 31, no. 182, (1892): 528-530.

¹⁷ "Obituary, Henry Parkes", *Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1896, p. 6.

branch or rod.¹⁸ Although the term has been widely used for over two hundred years, its innuendo has varied tremendously over time, prompting recent critical scholarly analysis.¹⁹ Notably, especially in the latter half of twentieth century, ‘radical’ was more commonly applied to left-wing views and tended to imply an entire package of associated values.²⁰ In the twenty-first century, it has been reinvented as a sometime descriptor of right-wing beliefs such as climate change denialism.²¹ Throughout, the word has been colloquially used to describe the values or policies of a political opponent. Given that the extensive Childe literature often includes primary or secondary references which describe him as ‘radical’, it is important to remember that almost anyone with significant socio-political influence during his lifetime was, at some time or other, similarly described as ‘radical’.

Finally, much of the debate and formulation of Federation and a Constitution occurred during a decade which experienced extreme economic, social and moral turmoil. Although most people today have some awareness of the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the subsequent years of the 1930s Depression, many do not realise that the 1890s depression was probably worse internationally, than the one thirty years later. It too was a period of hardship, hunger and anxiety suffered by families and economies, triggered, in part, by collapses in the international banking system, described at the time as “bank smashes”.²² Unemployment, underemployment and the necessity of accepting menial, sometimes dangerous, poorly paid work, prompted many to question fundamental values around social safety nets, the roles of government, and the inequities of social privilege. These debates took place in a world without the internet and personal phones – newspapers, sermons and public speaking were the tools of political change; activist movements focussing on different aspects of social justice were as likely to grow from church-based congregations, as from

¹⁸ W. Skeat Walter, *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. (Forgotten Books, 1901).

¹⁹ Glenn Burgess, “Introduction,” in *English Radicalism, 1550-1850: Tradition or Fabrication?*, ed. Glenn Burgess and Matthew Festenstein (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2-3, 8.

²⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²¹ Olve Krange, Bjørn P. Kaltenborn, and Martin Hultman, ““Don’t confuse me with facts”—how right wing populism affects trust in agencies advocating anthropogenic climate change as a reality,” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8, no. 1 (2021): 2-3.

²² Childe, *How labour governs*, xxvii.

the trade unions.²³ These socio-economic interrogations were, therefore, entwined with the birth of the federal Constitution, texturing its definitions and clauses. Childe was born into this decade, into a prominent ecclesiastical family whose role it was to provide solace and perspective to those who were experiencing profound need.

Competing Christianities

Throughout Childe's life, although most Caucasians in Australia described themselves as 'Christians', tension existed between the majority who identified as 'Protestant' and those who regarded themselves as 'Catholic'. A brief outline of Australia's religious mosaic at the time of Federation is useful because aspects of these identifications pervaded both private and public decisions and policies, especially during the first half of the twentieth century. At a personal level, this affected choices such as marriage partners, schooling options, both primary and secondary, as well as the social and professional interactions that occurred within regular congregational activities. Awareness of the affinities and loyalties, or conversely, antipathies, has also, at various critical junctures, shaped both the composition and fissioning of political parties and symbols of national identity.

In 1901, barely 1% of the population called themselves atheists or agnostics; there had been a trend in that direction for some time in English intellectual thought but it was not widespread in Australia.²⁴ The majority of Australians claimed some affinity with one of the monotheisms; the degree to which individuals were 'practising', varied. Synagogues and mosques existed, but were rare. That said, Australia's first Australian-born Governor General (1931-1936), Sir Isaac Isaacs, was proudly Jewish.²⁵ Of the majority Christians, around 25% were Roman Catholics, accepting that the Pope, domiciled in the Vatican, was God's appointed ruler on earth; with this came a belief that the ecclesiastical interpretation of the Bible should not be questioned and that the clergy should be celibate. The Protestant majority were divided among many different denominations, for example, Anglican (Church of England), and the 'Non-Conformists', such as Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker and so on.

²³ Mark Douglas Stiles, *Reading Ruskin: architecture and social reform in Australia, 1889–1908* (PhD diss., University of NSW, 2010), 254.

²⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁵ JB Trivett, *The Official Year Book of New South Wales 1916*, (WA Gullick, Government Printer, 1917), 797. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Each had different approaches to ritual, the relationship with authority and/or the individual's personal responsibility around conscience, attitudes to thrift, charity and ostentation, and the reasonable roles of women in their respective societies; while some differentiating elements might appear marginal to non-practising eyes, they were important to their adherents.

The Protestant/ Catholic tensions continued to provoke prejudice and conflict in Britain and its dominions; consequently, some English Anglicans, later known as the Tractarians or 'high church', attempted to bridge the doctrines by incorporating aspects of Catholic ritual and interpretation into Protestant practices. Other Anglicans considered this a betrayal of their beliefs. Childe's father, an Anglican reverend in Sydney in the late nineteenth century, was reportedly an advocate of Tractarian philosophy, putting him at odds with some of the more conservative members of Sydney's Anglican diocese. Some years later, another Tractarian cleric in Australia, Canon Garland, would carefully craft a commemoration service for the war dead that would be acceptably respectful for as many faiths as possible. The aim was to enable Australian communities to share their grieving. This would come to be known as the Anzac Service.²⁶

Education and 'Self-help'

Although many of us now expect access to secondary schooling, in the early colonies, especially outside of the cities, it was mostly provided by private, usually denominational schools. Therefore, it was only accessible to families who could afford the fees, or to exceptionally bright students who won scholarships. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, socially progressive interest groups had campaigned for the establishment of free, secular, government-funded secondary schooling throughout the colonies, however, with intermittent success until the twentieth century.²⁷ The only public high schools in the colony of NSW outside of Sydney in 1898 were in Maitland, around 170 km north of Sydney – one for boys and another for girls.²⁸ Thus, the children of single parent families – usually

²⁶ John A. Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance: the essential contribution of Canon David John Garland," *Pacifica* 19, no. 1 (2006): 63-66. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁷ Evatt, *Liberalism in Australia*, 44-46.

²⁸ Portus, *Happy highways*, 22.

those without a father present – were especially challenged for access beyond primary school.

Extraordinarily, in spite of the poor availability of secondary schooling, the nineteenth century colonies had very high literacy rates – greater than 95% by Federation – due to the *Education Acts* that each had introduced.²⁹ Libraries flourished – there were more than 1,000 across Australia by 1901 – and there was a remarkable drive in the community for ‘self-help’, a concept popularised in the nineteenth century, perhaps stimulated by the increasing availability of affordable printed books, lectures and pamphlets.³⁰ For example, Sydney-based WJ McKell (1891-1985), had grown up in impoverished circumstances after his father abandoned the family but was strongly encouraged by his mother to succeed; he left school and started earning a living by the age of fourteen, became active in the Union movement and was later elected to the NSW Parliament in 1917. After Latin and logic tutoring from VG Childe – who remained a life-long friend – he studied at night for a Law degree and was called to the NSW Bar in 1925. He was eventually appointed Australia’s Governor-General from 1947 to 1953. From his teen years, even while working long hours, McKell was motivated and able to buy copies of challenging social commentary to read while commuting; of special interest were Ruskin, William Morris, Bellamy, Paine and the prominent Fabian, George Bernard Shaw.³¹

After Federation, the Australian universities were involved with external and evening education programs in ways almost unimaginable in the current era. The University of Sydney, for example, was funded by the State government to provide Evening and Extension classes for selected subjects so that motivated, older, working citizens could also aspire to tertiary skills and qualifications.³² Then, in 1913, an English organisation, the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA), negotiated agreements with the extant Australian universities, whereby University-approved tutors would also provide rigorous and relevant

²⁹ Stiles, *Reading Ruskin*, 6. See also the data for primary and secondary education in *The Official Year Book of New South Wales* for 1916 (Trivett, *Year Book 1916*, 99-140).

³⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³¹ Christopher Cunneen, *William John McKell: boilermaker, premier, governor-general* (University NSW Press, 2000), 30, 32, 64, 82.

³² Fred Alexander, “Sydney University and the WEA (1913-1919),” *The Australian Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1955): 39-41; Trivett, *Year Book 1916*, 143, 150.

classes to members. The University of Sydney's Professor of Philosophy, Prof. Francis Anderson, inspired some of his students, including Childe and Evatt in 1913, to join the newly formed organisation.³³ By chance, in 1914, the Sydney WEA ran a course on industrial law for Union secretaries, so that unions could spend less on expensive advice from external barristers. McKell, by then a 22 year old Union official, was apparently an attentive student at this course, although it is unknown if he met Childe and/ or Evatt at this time, or only later.³⁴ After returning to Australia in late 1917, Childe had various involvements with the WEA in Sydney and Brisbane over the next two to three years.

Social Justice (and socialism)

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was a bubbling stew of competing political, social and moral ideologies, both in Britain itself, as well as its various colonies. The following sketch will hopefully provide some context to better understand the contemporaneous understanding of various terms, their associations and their innuendoes. This is useful because in the intervening decades, some concepts have acquired very different associations – even, **opposite** meanings – both as a result of later socio-historical events and also localised interpretations of them by different culture groups. Further, the degree of contemporaneous *personal* engagement with the political and ethical issues of the day varied – just like today – according to the degree with which external circumstances impinged upon quotidian life, along with the threats, or *absence* of risk, to the fulfilment of needs and desires.

The word, 'socialism' was invoked by a vast array of nineteenth century scholars, activists and workers, although its intended meaning varied from one group to another.³⁵ It had blossomed in the northern hemisphere as an articulated concept with the 1789 French Revolution, in which the hereditary privilege of the aristocracy was attacked in a popular uprising that aspired to more equitable access to opportunity, along with rewards being based on merit rather than cronyism. Over subsequent decades, it became a rallying call for

³³ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 44.

³⁴ Cunneen, *McKell*, 32. Childe (1892-1957), Evatt (1894-1965) and McKell (1891-1985) were contemporaries, but from significantly different backgrounds. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁵ Evatt, *Liberalism in Australia*, 63.

those swept up as exploited labour in what came to be known as the Industrial Revolution. These issues around human exploitation coincided with the continued momentum of the Abolitionist movement – mostly driven by church-based groups and especially the Quakers – that campaigned for slavery to be banned. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, theorist Karl Marx, a German-born resident of England, writing in German, formulated a body of analysis, later referred to as Marxism or communism, arguing not only that a comprehension of the social, hereditary *classes* was essential to understanding how the majority was manipulated by a property-owning minority, but also predicting that the privileged minority would ‘inevitably’ be overthrown and their material assets collectivised.³⁶ In contrast, others during the later decades of the nineteenth century – notably the English-based Fabian Society – believed that broad-based social betterment would be best achieved by research into the nature and extent of social issues, activism to promote legislative and institutional improvement, and a guiding sense of ethical ‘fairness’. In other words, social justice could be achieved without resort to the violence of, for example, the French Revolution. Various aspects of these approaches and intellectual explorations influenced contemporaneous social commentators such as the popularly-read art critic, John Ruskin, who had long argued for the value of well-crafted, individual items over the shoddiness of mass-produced output.

For many in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘socialist’ values were an integral part of a *humanist* identity, although the precise nature and priority of specific ideals varied. Broadly, they embraced the ‘progressive’ attitude that communities also had shared needs and that it was a duty of government to facilitate access. This was distinctly different to feudalism or absolute monarchy, yet abstract enough to include eclectic visions. Some activist groups drew upon the organisational resources, networks and values of various church groups and described themselves as Christian Socialists (or socialist Christians). Other groups were born of the organised labour and trade union movement which was evolving during the nineteenth century; their priorities, therefore, were shaped by the needs of their membership. Yet others simultaneously drew upon both traditions. Further, as countries, colonies and empires experienced the booms and busts of the international

³⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

economic cycles, these socially-connected groups melded elements of socialism, conservatism, liberalism, capitalism, colonialism, suffrage and feminism in constantly changing proportions, to invent new political fusions that would later invite various critiques around performance and accountability. Childe's formative years were spent in an affluent, intellectual social milieu in which the relative merits of these competing values and policies were critically examined and challenged.³⁷

Adding yet more dimension to these tumbling tides of political and social innovation, for a world without modern communications technologies, there was a remarkable, timely sharing of intellectual trends and news across the planet. Paradoxically, this also contributed to an emergence of distinctly local senses of identity, energised by regional concerns. In Australia, for example, the unusual, physically isolated circumstances of the Caucasian immigrant population was shaped into an aspirational identity of both self-reliance and loyalty. This was partly a consequence of the evolving implementation of the Responsible Government doctrine, as well as a reaction to the vicissitudes of the international economy. In other colonies, however, with numerically dominant, pre-colonial populations, such as the Indian subcontinent, incipient independence movements evolved, striving to (re)gain cultural and economic autonomy.³⁸ Notably, no Marxist or communist polities existed at that time; therefore, until the overthrow of Russia's constitutional monarchy in 1917, those possibilities remained theoretical constructs.³⁹

Parliamentary politics

Most British colonies around the world inherited the Westminster bicameral parliamentary system. The *intention* of the bicameral system is to have a mechanism whereby the policies – legislation and regulations – of a 'popularly' elected 'lower house' are scrutinised by a more independent 'upper house', to ensure that they are in the best interests of 'the community', before being approved and implemented. In the British precedent, the confirmatory approval for policy proposed by the House of Commons is bestowed by the House of Lords, whose members are traditionally mostly from the peerage, in other words,

³⁷ This is more fully described in Chapter 3, *Sydney, 1892 to 1910*.

³⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

mostly an hereditary aristocracy.⁴⁰ This social structure had no direct equivalent in most nineteenth century British colonies, so they developed local mechanisms to provide scrutiny. Again, a detailed analysis of these matters is beyond this thesis, however, while some elements may now appear arcane and abstruse, for the young, smart, ambitious scholars of their day, the details connected with being a part of a brand new, self-governing dominion were both well known, and the stuff of lively, ongoing debate. In Australian colonies prior to Federation, the councillors of the upper houses (Legislative Councils) were *appointed* because they were perceived to be respectable, intelligent and fair. A corollary was that colonial upper houses had relatively few members.⁴¹ With contemporary eyes, this was also a flawed system, vulnerable to various abuses and likely to entrench existing privilege at the expense of those without access to the corridors of government, especially those without franchise – that is, the right to vote.⁴² Even in the nineteenth century, however, the weaknesses of the parliamentary system were obvious to many, contributing to the evolution of political parties, trade unions, guilds, professional associations and employer bodies.

After Federation, the senators of the new Federal parliament's upper house (Senate) were popularly elected, although in the normal course of events, only half of the senate seats would be contested during each federal election. The Constitutional intention was to create a body that was less susceptible to political volatility.⁴³ Consequently, elected senators were – and remain – mostly associated with specific political parties, rather than being appointed or hereditary members. Australia's Constitution also includes a 'last resort' mechanism, known as a double dissolution, for managing irreconcilable, paralysing tensions between the lower and upper houses. If granted by the Governor-General of the day, both houses of Parliament, including all Senate seats, are simultaneously dissolved and these are contested in the ensuing election. The intention of the mechanism is to break a deadlocked parliament, with a refreshed, democratic mandate. Although Australian federal politics

⁴⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

were mercurial in the first decade after Federation – and in spite of four earlier requests for a double dissolution – the mechanism was only used for the first time in 1914. This occurred just before Childe commenced his journey to Oxford, and shortly before the declaration of war. Interestingly, HV Evatt focussed his research topic on the parameters of decisions made by the monarch’s representative in self-governing dominions, in his post-graduate degrees.⁴⁴

Although the political parties campaigning for federal parliamentary roles emerged from State politics, *new* parties – with different names – soon arose for the federal contests. Three aspects of the evolving party system are especially noteworthy. First, specific values that might *now* be considered ‘left-wing’ (progressive) or ‘right-wing’ (conservative) were sometimes *both* advocated by a *single* group; relative to current value systems, the platforms of early parties and activist groups often appear to be an internally inconsistent, uncomfortable mash of ideas, however, they were not perceived that way at the time.⁴⁵ Thus, assumptions can be misguided. Second, the more ‘progressive’ values were sometimes most strongly advocated by those from privileged circumstances – their personal affluence and opportunity did not necessarily blind them to the ethical dimensions of social policy. Therefore, it is unwise to assume ‘class-consistent’ ideologies unless confirmed by credible sources. Further, relatively ‘conservative’ and/or parochial views were sometimes espoused by those with little to gain from them. Third, in some cases, the labels used then, have different – even opposite – meanings now, which can obscure the intended meaning of contemporaneous texts. For example, in current usage, ‘industrialist’ usually means an owner and/or manager of a large industrial enterprise; such entities are generally assumed to be ‘for profit’ and thus, capitalist. In the 1910s, however, ‘industrialists’ were members of the trade unions who represented the workers of large industrial enterprises, such as the mining companies. Thus, industrialists campaigned for workers’ rights and sometimes went on strike.⁴⁶ Similarly, the word ‘liberal’, especially when part of the name of a political

⁴⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁵ The Australian Labor Party (and various incarnations) ardently supported the White Australia policy for decades before it was jettisoned as a shameful notion. Beatrice Webb, of the Fabian movement, did not support female suffrage (Beatrice Webb, Sidney Webb, and Albert Gordon Austin, *The Webbs’ Australian diary, 1898* (I. Pitman & Sons, 1965), 73-74).

⁴⁶ Childe, *How labour governs*, 39, 50. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

party, can have quite contradictory associations. In the present day, Australia's Liberal Party is, ideologically, the closest major party to Britain's Conservative Party (colloquially, the 'Tories'), however, in the first years after Federation, 'liberalism' was mostly associated with more progressive politics.⁴⁷

Liberalism

The essay, *Liberalism in Australia*, set out to describe through to *its* Present, how Australian Liberalism had evolved from its British precedent. It was written by a twenty year old, Third Year Arts student, HV Evatt, most likely during the 1914 University of Sydney academic year.⁴⁸ Evatt was already renowned for his exceptional academic brilliance, leadership qualities and sporting prowess; he was also expected to be the 1915 recipient for the NSW Rhodes Scholarship, enabling studies in Oxford. Like so many others, however, he had had a challenging year. In August, several University peers including his closest confidante, VG Childe, had departed for their scholarships at Oxford and almost immediately, war had been declared. In the ensuing national enthusiasm to volunteer for military service overseas, Evatt had tried to enlist but in a rare experience of 'failure', he had been rejected due to his poor eyesight.⁴⁹ His essay, however, would be awarded the 1915 Beauchamp Prize and, in 1918, would become his first published book, and included a Preface by the University's Professor of History, Prof. Wood, an advocate for socialism and pacifism.

Although Evatt's analysis focussed mostly upon Liberalism as an evolving body of values-driven principles that could guide the policy development of political parties, he began by acknowledging the different inherent temperaments of individuals, along with the unequal access of community members to the building blocks of opportunity. These were matters that had been emphasised in the 1913 Philosophy classes that Evatt and Childe had taken with Professor Anderson, where they had also been encouraged to join the newly established WEA, an organisation which was being set up to improve the access of working people to good quality, further education. Simultaneously, both had had an ongoing involvement with the University's Christian Union. Evatt's essay, divided into an

⁴⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁸ The Australian academic year conventionally runs from March to November in a calendar year.

⁴⁹ John Murphy, *Evatt: a life* (University of NSW, 2016), 36. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

introduction and twelve chapters, detailed Australia's colonial history and its experience of the Responsible Government doctrine up to 1914, to discern how a distinctly Australian Liberalism was evolving.⁵⁰ The author proposed that differentiating factors included the lack of an aristocracy, the specifically regional nature of organised labour and trade union organisations, and the rarity, relative to democracies internationally, of elected Labour governments that gave priority to social safety-net policies such as accessible, secular education and the age pension.⁵¹ Evatt argued that while the values themselves might be shared by socialist campaigners, Socialism's fundamental weakness was its focus on purely economic matters, to the detriment of the "intellectual, moral and religious" needs of people.⁵² He also argued that the trade union and Labour Party enforcement of collective solidarity was problematic but concluded that a mature, 'New Liberalism' could successfully meld the individual freedoms advocated by Liberalist theory, with the practical support for shared community needs – that is, the common good – that were best delivered by centralised (federal) government. Please note that Evatt's 1914 'New Liberalism' should **not** be confused with a later, almost diametrically opposed, late twentieth century doctrine known as *neoliberalism*.

The Australian Labor Party

Although disconcerting to the reader, from the early 1890s, Australia's Labour/ Labor Parties did not agree on a standard spelling, either federally or in the individual colonies/ states, for around twenty five years. For opaque reasons, eventually the American spelling of 'Labor' was mandated for the dominant party. Consequently, the spelling in the text will change, depending upon the state and year – apologies.

In grossly reductionist terms, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the pre-Federation colonies drifted into political contests with two 'parties', the Protectionists and the Free Traders, both of which mostly represented the interests of business entities, including farmers. The Free Traders advocated unimpeded trade between the Australian colonies, while the Protectionists argued that tax/ duty/ tariff revenue provided a net

⁵⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵² Evatt, *Liberalism in Australia*, 63.

benefit to colony incomes. Thus, in the last decades of that century, employees – whether ongoing or casual, skilled and unskilled, itinerant or sedentary – had little political voice. Over time, drawing upon debates of the day such as slavery, franchise, Christian values and self-betterment, trade unions formed, supplementing the extant guilds. With evolving organisational skills, groups of workers were able to negotiate better pay and working conditions with employers. By the 1890s, especially when the ‘bank smashes’ hit, these entities recognised the need to have a greater voice in their local parliaments, to ensure that better conditions and protections for poor, worker families were legislated. This led to the formation of Labour-oriented political parties in the six Australian colonies. During the early years, the elected Labour representatives often held ‘the balance of power’, meaning that whether the Free Trader or Protectionist parties had formed government, they still had to negotiate with Labour members to pass legislation.⁵³ Consequently, the elected Labour representatives were better able to negotiate desired outcomes for workers.

Though energised by the fledgling trade union movement, Australia’s Labour parties quickly recognised the value of encouraging memberships (and fees) from community members who supported the policies and ideologies of the aspiring parliamentary party. Thus, the various faith-based community organisations – a portion of whose members might also be in a trade union – felt that their doctrinal values were consonant with the aims of the Labour parties. Others of a more secular, humanist outlook were similarly attracted and, as in the present day, enthusiasm (and support) ebbed and flowed, depending upon external circumstances and the effectiveness of elected representatives and their backers.⁵⁴

One characteristic of the Labour-oriented political parties that has provoked particular debate throughout the decades is the practice of binding their parliamentary representatives to policies that have previously been agreed by the membership.⁵⁵ It is useful to have some familiarity with the meaning and origin of its specialist terms, because if they are later used in metaphors or criticisms, their implications will be better understood. Since inception, their policy positions have been formulated and debated at Party

⁵³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁴ Childe, *How labour governs*, 74, 77-79.

⁵⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Conferences – originally convened at the colony level and later also federally; once agreed, the policies become ‘planks’ of the party ‘platform’. These planks are expected to be supported by the Party’s ‘Caucus’, that is, the body of its elected, parliamentary members. Thus, Caucus members are ‘pledged’ to uphold the decisions of the Party’s membership. This structure evolved to counter the possibility that elected representatives would, over time, be seduced by the enticements of power, forgetting their constituents along the way, or would use their personal charisma opportunistically.⁵⁶ Inevitably at times, an individual parliamentarian’s personal view on a matter will differ from the Party’s platform; in such cases, the parliamentarian is obliged, by Party rules, to use their parliamentary vote in accordance with the Party platform.⁵⁷ Over the decades, deeply contentious issues have occasionally ignited fierce conflict between the parliamentary representatives and their less pragmatic Party members; sometimes this has led to a fissioning of the Party.

The transition from being a collection of colonies to a federated, self-governing dominion with a fresh parliament for ‘national’ matters, guided by a new Constitution with intentional ambiguities and unspoken expectations, encouraged some elected representatives to move from State politics to the federal sphere. Before long, a surprising possibility occurred in Australia’s Federal parliament; elected Labor Party members were able to form minority governments and by 1910, after a decade of post-Federation volatility, a *majority* Federal Labor government, led by Andrew Fisher, was voted in. It became Australia’s first full-term parliament.⁵⁸ Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, appointed Governor-General to Australia just before the outbreak of the war, later described Andrew Fisher’s achievement as exceedingly unlikely – Fisher was a former child miner in Scotland who migrated, educated himself, took on union roles in Queensland and was eventually elected as Prime Minister.⁵⁹ Further, he also became Australia’s High Commissioner to London during the latter years of the Great War.⁶⁰ Thus, among the international, progressive intelligentsia of the late nineteenth and

⁵⁶ Childe, *How labour governs*, 16-17.

⁵⁷ Childe, *How labour governs*, 31. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁸ Nick Dyrenfurth, “Labour and politics,” *Labour history* 100 (2011a), 152. Australia was the first democracy in the world to elect a majority Labour government.

⁵⁹ Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and villains*, 134-135. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁰ Scott, *Official History Vol XI*, 302.

early twentieth centuries, Australia was perceived as a fascinating petri dish – the portent of an imminent political future with a more egalitarian society.⁶¹ Understandably, this was inspirational for young, talented, well-connected scholars, eager to make their contribution to the future.

The Universal Training Scheme

One of the more complicated issues that the new Federal parliament had to resolve was defence; what were the fledgling nation's responsibilities and its long-term requirements? Originally each antipodean colony had been responsible for its own protection but defence was now a national matter. The relevant legislation was redrafted several times over during the first decade, however, most parliamentarians agreed that Australian personnel, whether part-time or full-time, voluntary or compelled, should only be used for the direct defence of Australia; they should not to be delegated to overseas command.⁶² Further, given that the continent was physically isolated from other parts of the British Empire, present and past, there was a clear need to develop capacities, while building upon an ethos of self-reliance. This included upskilling the communities, acquiring land and sea-based hardware, and developing effective communications networks.⁶³

At Labor's 1908 "Inter-State Labour Conference"⁶⁴ in Brisbane, the then Federal Opposition Leader, Andrew Fisher, successfully championed a new plank in Labor's platform whereby men in a specified age range should participate in 'home defence' training and service.⁶⁵ Thus, when the Federal government of the day presented legislation for the Universal Service Scheme in 1909, it passed with Labor support. Unless exempted on the grounds of being medically unfit, or a theological student, or an alien, or living too far from a training centre, male students between twelve and eighteen had to participate in junior or senior

⁶¹ Dyrenfurth, "Labour and politics", 108; Colin Nettelbeck, "French Awareness of Australia: The Role of Albert Métin (1871-1918)," *The French Australian Review* 64 (2018), 27-29, 32-34; Webb, Webb and Austin, *Diary 1898*, 113-115. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶³ From 1905 on, there were growing concerns around Germany developing greater naval capacities. German colonies were also being established in New Guinea and various Pacific islands.

⁶⁴ Childe, *How labour governs*,:xiv. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁵ "The Defence Question," *The Advertiser*, 8 July 1908, p. 7. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

cadets, while other males up to the age of twenty six had to register for the home defence militia.⁶⁶ Notably, participation was presented as a “privilege”, denied to those of ‘poor character’.⁶⁷ By the time it was eventually promulgated 1 January 1911, it was only obligatory for males born after 1893; therefore, while it was applicable to 1894-born Evatt, 1892-born Childe was exempted.⁶⁸

Since Childe was at university from 1911 to 1913 and did not travel to Britain until the second half of 1914, it would be useful to have a better understanding of the opportunities available to those who missed the age catchment of this popular policy, or were medically unfit, or theologically opposed to military participation. Evatt was in his final year of secondary school in 1911 and although he was a keen sportsman, his attempted enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force was rejected on the grounds of his afflicted eyesight.⁶⁹ It is unknown if his astigmatism had had any impact upon his Universal Training contribution, however, he appears to have initially supported a later wartime Conscription proposal, where the government of the day sought to despatch Universal Service recruits to fight *overseas*.⁷⁰ He had withdrawn his support by the second Conscription referendum in late 1917.⁷¹

⁶⁶ https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/conscription/universal_service But *NSW Year Book 1916* calls it Universal Training, pp 81-83.

⁶⁷ Bobbie Oliver, *Peacemongers: conscientious objectors to military service in Australia, 1911-1945* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1997), 17.

⁶⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁹ NAA MT1486/1, Item ID 9558870 Application to Enlist in the Australian Imperial Force.

⁷⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷¹ GC Bolton, "Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894-1965)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 11 June 2025 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/evatt-herbert-vere-bert-10131>

Chapter 3

Sydney, 1892 to 1910

On 14 April 1892, Vere Gordon Childe was born in North Sydney, an affluent suburb near the shores of Sydney Harbour, Australia.¹ It would be another forty years before the Sydney Harbour Bridge would supplant the role of ferries for shuttling the residents of the northern, leafy parts of the city to the central business district with its law courts, parliament, train terminal and University, along with the various freight docks and their working class hinterlands.

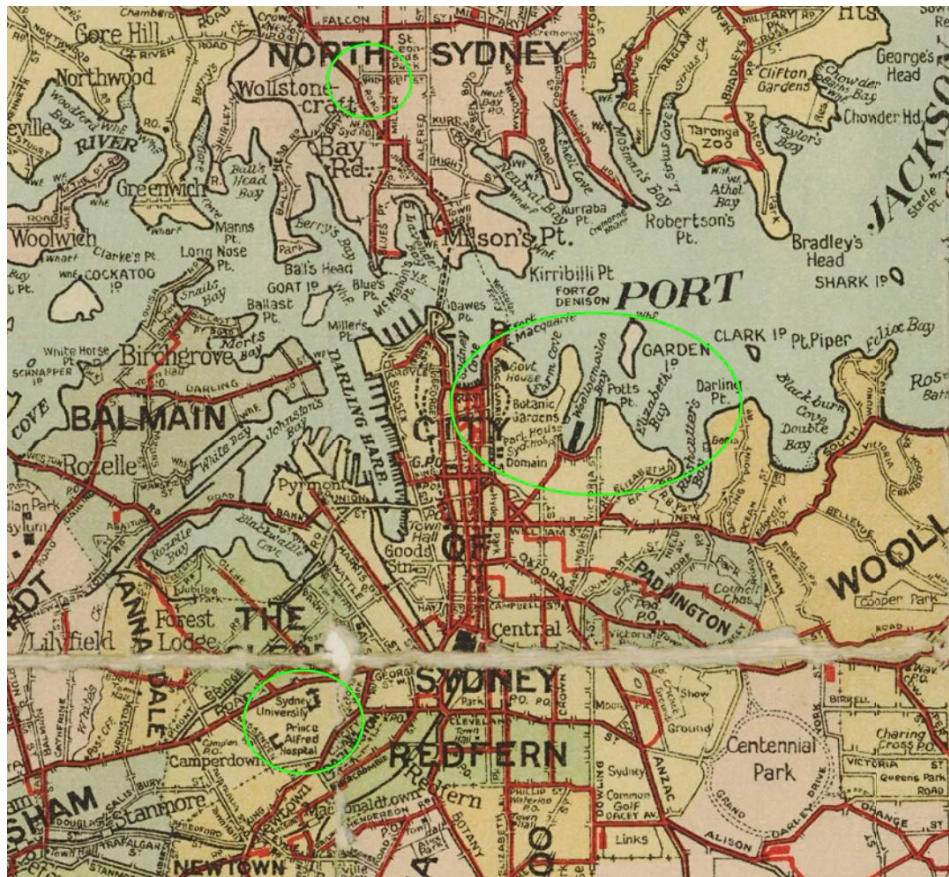


Figure 3.1: Detail of North Sydney, Elizabeth Bay and the University of Sydney areas, from municipality maps series, Sydney Metropolitan Area, 1917. <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VKPIWXQkw>

¹ "Births", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1892, p. 1.

Although we normally only consider Childe's own intellectual achievements, he came from a family that was academically oriented, and probably somewhat unconventional. His father, Stephen Henry Childe, completed a BA at Cambridge in 1869 and was awarded the Chancellor's Medal in Law in 1870, although he seems always to have planned a career in the Anglican Church.² This would be consonant with the expectations and ethos of his Christian missionary-oriented family; Stephen Childe's father, Rev. Charles Frederick Childe, had been the headmaster, from 1839 to 1858, of the Christian Mission Society (CMS), based in Islington, London. The CMS was an institution which provided a foundation in Christian teachings to both intending British missionaries as well as promising indigenous students from Britain's extensive colonies, facilitating their return to their own communities, to spread Christian precepts with a Protestant, Anglican orientation.³

After several positions of short duration in English parishes, Stephen Childe migrated to Australia in 1878 with his wife of eight years, Mary, and their five children, ranging in ages from around three to eight.⁴ Unfortunately, he was widowed soon after but in 1880, took up a position with the approval of the then Bishop, as rector of the wealthy Church of England parish in North Sydney, then known as Willoughby. This came with an annual salary of £475 plus accommodation for the family at the Rectory.⁵ Willoughby's St Thomas Church was about to be grandly rebuilt, enabling it to seat more than 900 people in its nave. When visiting Australia a few months later, Princes Albert and George (later King George V) laid St Thomas' new foundation stone. Apparently, the event had not originally been on their Australian tour schedule but after a flurry of arrangements the day before, press releases went out.⁶ The *Sydney Daily Telegraph* of Saturday, 6 August - page 5, column 1 - announced that the ceremony would occur at 11am that morning. By chance, directly adjacent on the mirroring page, column 6 of page 4, an editorialising piece began,

² Irving, *Fatal lure*, 10.

³ *Centenary Volume of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, 1799-1899*, (Church Missionary Society, 1902), 80.

⁴ Green, *Prehistorian*, 4, 7, xviii. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵ Derricourt, "Radical archaeologist," *Australian Archaeology* 79, no. 1 (2014a): 55; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 7.

⁶ "Laying the Foundation-Stone of St. Thomas", *Town and Country*, August 13, 1881, p. 14.

“That the aborigines of the colony have a claim upon the people who have taken possession of their patrimony will not be denied by persons who are endowed with a sense of justice and equity. To all intents and purposes the land was theirs by right of first settlement and of possession.”⁷

Although the article appears to be ‘radical’ by arguing that Australia’s aboriginal peoples should be given land rights – almost 100 years before this was legally recognised by Australia’s High Court – with 21st century eyes, the rest of the piece reads as relatively paternalistic because it simultaneously endorses the (Christian) mission model as the preferred ‘managing’ mechanism.⁸ Nevertheless, this highlights the diversity of opinions – progressive, ‘radical’ and conservative – that were being debated at this time. In spite of the impromptu arrangements, the consecration appears to have been a great success, with fine weather, bunting, a crowd of around three thousand well-wishers, the local fire trucks and their uniformed crews, along with various other dignitaries.⁹ The sumptuous rebuild was completed in 1884.¹⁰

The Reverend Stephen Childe eventually remarried in 1886, at the age of 42.¹¹ The bride was 33 year old Harriet Gordon, and she would become the mother of V Gordon Childe. Notably, the bride’s parents were unable to attend the wedding of their first born daughter. Harriet’s father, Alexander Gordon QC (grandfather Alexander Gordon), had retired in 1885 as a New South Wales Legislative Council (Upper House) member and returned to England soon after.¹² Originally from England, he had come to Australia in the late 1850s with his wife, Annie Gordon (*nee* Chambers). She had been born in India to a missionary family. They brought their first two daughters, Harriet and Leonora. The Gordon parents remained in Australia until late 1885, with the exception of a period from sometime in 1874 to early

⁷ *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 6 August, 1881, 4 (col 6).

⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁹ “St. Thomas’ Church, North Shore,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 August, 1881, 3.

¹⁰ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 7.

¹¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

1878, when they also returned to Britain.¹³ Besides the commitments of his legal profession, grandfather Alexander was actively involved with an evangelical faction of the Anglican Church, often portrayed as having notably conservative views, particularly in regard to standards of female modesty.¹⁴

Commentaries of the Christian religious matrix of nineteenth century Australian colonies indicate that it was a period of many schisms, manifesting not only in different attitudes around the role of beliefs in daily life but also in tensions about 'interfaith' marriages. There were philosophical differences between Catholics and Protestants; similarly, there were doctrinal disagreements between the Anglican (Church of England) Protestants and the non-Anglican Protestants, such as the (originally) northern European Lutherans and the attitudes of each towards evangelism, the role(s) of authorities and the balance between 'submission' and the value of doing 'good works'. These philosophical differences had inspired some to seek common ground between the factions and thereby heal the fractures. Mostly they were known as the 'Oxford Movement', or the 'Tractarians', or the Anglican 'High Church'. Grandfather Alexander Gordon QC, along with the later Bishop presiding over the diocese of Sydney were associated with the Evangelicals, or 'Low Church'. In contrast, Stephen Childe was more partial to the views of the Tractarian/ Oxford-originated sect of Anglicans, viewed by 'Low' Anglicans as advocating an undesirable resort to the precepts of Catholicism.¹⁵ They argued that it overvalued the importance of doing 'good deeds' and undervalued the necessity of the individual recognising that 'salvation' depends upon the grace of God.

It is unknown why the 32 year old Harriet and her 27 year old brother, Alexander (uncle Alexander Gordon), both unmarried, chose to stay in Australia after their parents returned to Britain in 1885, but it does imply that they felt settled here.¹⁶ Uncle Alexander Gordon had been born in Sydney's Redfern, a suburb coincidentally close to the University of Sydney. Although he had undertaken some of his schooling in Britain, he returned to

¹³ KJ Cable, 'Gordon Alexander (1815)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 16 October 2021, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gordon-alexande-3636/text5655> ; Green, *Prehistorian*, 5. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁴ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 9.

¹⁵ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 10-11.

¹⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Australia and was admitted to New South Wales' Bar in 1882. In 1904, he would be elected as a KC.¹⁷ If the 1886 marriage between Stephen and Alexander's older sister, Harriet, occurred in Sydney, it seems unlikely that he would not have 'given away the bride' since their father was half a world away; if it occurred in Melbourne, it is possible that he was unable to attend. In later years, uncle Alexander Gordon and his firstborn son, Alexander (cousin Alexander Gordon), would both feature prominently throughout Childe's life.

Several years after the wedding, at the age of 36, Harriet gave birth to a son, Ronald Gordon; poignantly, he lived for less than a month.¹⁸ Three years later, when her husband was in his late 40s and she was almost 39 years old, Vere Gordon Childe, was born. His half-siblings ranged in age from around 15 to 22; his three half-sisters are not known to have married but seemed to have a strong affection for Childe throughout their lives. Childe seems to have shared this bond, along with an ongoing concern for their material wellbeing. One of his half-brothers married and had two daughters, while the other migrated to the United States in 1921.¹⁹

Childe, therefore, met neither his paternal grandparents who had died in England by the end of the nineteenth century, nor his maternal grandfather, who had returned to Britain years before Childe's birth and died there in 1903. Green states, however, that his maternal grandmother, Annie Gordon, lived in Gloucestershire until 1924.²⁰ Although it is possible that she did not maintain any contact with her children residing in Australia – and their children – this seems unlikely. Consequently, it is therefore more likely that Childe would have had some recurrent contact with his maternal grandmother, at least by family hearsay, if not in person.

It is now also clear that Childe maintained an ongoing relationship in Britain with his father's brother, the Reverend Canon Christopher Venn Childe. Like Childe's father, Christopher Venn Childe was educated at Cambridge and was also awarded, in 1872, the Chancellor's

¹⁷ "New Supreme Court Judge," *Evening News*, 26 April 1910, p. 6; <https://researchdata.edu.au/hon-sir-alexander-kc-kt/145474>, viewed 21 February 2022.

¹⁸ "Deaths," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 April 1889, p. 1.

¹⁹ Special thanks to Dr. K Meheux who alerted me to this (personal communication) Further confirmation is found in various contemporaneous newspapers, including *The Armidale Chronicle*, 20 August 1921, p. 4.

²⁰ Green, *Prehistorian*, 5.

Medal in Law. He was called to the London Bar in 1873 and ordained into the Anglican Church in 1876, eventually becoming the Canon of Gloucester from 1897 to 1936.²¹ It is unclear at this stage how soon they met after Childe arrived in Britain in September, 1914, but on his 1917 passport renewal form, submitted soon after completion of his Oxford studies and prior to his departure for Australia, Childe uses his paternal uncle's London address as his contact point and names him as his reference.²² The Rev. Canon Christopher Venn Childe died early in 1937; although Green states that he married, there do not appear to have been any children.

Emotionally and intellectually nourishing, these complicated – and enduring – relationships that Childe had with various people from both his maternal and paternal families are important, because some aspects are likely to have reinforced each other, such as styles of debate, assumed knowledge, the approach to family conversations, and concepts around the value of service to the less fortunate. On both sides of the family, there were strong backgrounds in the law - as barristers, sometimes judges, or as prominent advisors within religious hierarchies. There was also a distinct, identifiable history on both sides of the family with missionary work, which included engaging with peoples in colonies where the populations did not necessarily speak English as a first language. What remains unclear at present, is the degree to which the doctrinal beliefs of the various family members, paternal and maternal, were sympathetic to each other, or in conflict.

1890s Australia

The Australian colonies had sizzled with affluence and entrepreneurial zest during the 1880s, but by the 1890s, the worlds' economies were being sucked into a global Depression, at least as bad as the Depression of the 1930s. Childe was born into an Australia that was abruptly deprived of international investment; simultaneously, local real estate bubbles that had grown through the 1880s burst, triggering multiple collapses in the poorly

²¹ John Archibald Venn, ed. *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29. <https://archive.org/details/p2alumnicantabri02univuoft>, viewed 5 November 2021.

²² National Archives File KV2/2148, passport application dated 5 July 1917 with annotation dated 12 July 1917.

regulated private banks.²³ Unemployment soared, plunging many families into poverty and hunger. His father's beautifully rebuilt church – solid, airy, and at the top of a gentle hill, provided solace for many and became a focal point for various kinds of charitable committees.

Among the St Thomas' wardens was a talented, London-trained architect, Jeaffreson Jackson, who had arrived in Sydney in 1884, soon after a sketching tour in Normandy.²⁴ Although his first years in the colony had been professionally successful, the 1890s Depression stifled demand for architectural services and he had no commissions from 1893 to 1897. Finally, in 1898 – when Childe was six years old – Jackson received three new commissions, two of which were connected with Reverend Stephen Childe. One was for a replacement Rectory (family dwelling) as the old St Thomas one was in notoriously poor condition. The other was for a congenial, privately-owned residence in the Blue Mountains, a region several hours travel west of the Sydney CBD.²⁵ It is currently unknown whether one Childe-related commission functioned as a recommendation for the other, or if both were negotiated on an 'economy of scale' basis.

The Blue Mountains region had, since the early days of white settlement in Australia, been exploited for its timbers and quarry stones. Over time, it developed an eclectic population, from the hard-living miners to wealthy holiday makers, to academics and scientists. Especially during the exuberance of the 1880's, Katoomba grew as a resort town, rather like a hill station – those expatriate, glamorous mountain retreats away from the tropical humidity of the British Empire's colonial cities. Its train station had opened in 1881, and in 1882, the predecessor of the famous Carrington Hotel was built. Visitors would be met by horse drawn wagonettes at the train station, to be taken to their guest houses and the

²³ Bryan Fitz-Gibbon and Marianne Gizycki, "The 1970s | RDP 2001-07: A History of Last-Resort Lending and Other Support for Troubled Financial Institutions in Australia," Reserve Bank of Australia Research Discussion Papers December (2001): 21-23. Viewed 22 February 2022
<https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/rdp/2001/2001-07/1890s-depression.html>.

²⁴ Vanessa Dudman, *Two Houses by E. Jeaffreson Jackson R.I.B.A.: an architectural and historical survey* (Unpublished dissertation, University of Technology Sydney, 1991), 9.

²⁵ Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 11.

superb lookouts²⁶. At an indeterminate point in time, possibly after the real estate bubble collapsed around the time of Childe's birth, the Childe family acquired a plot of land in the Blue Mountains, two stations before Katoomba, now known as Wentworth Falls. The area had originally been called Weatherboard; around 1870, a new subdivision had been carved out on the other side of the highway and railway line, and its original, French-themed name was Brasfort.²⁷ The source of the funds has previously been described as Harriet's "marriage settlement"²⁸ but there is currently no primary evidence available for the statement. Two years before the Childes' architectural commission, the town officially changed its name to Wentworth Falls.²⁹

The family's land was approximately a half hour walk from the station, if a local wagonette was not available. When cleared, it had a stunning view across the vast Jamison Valley. Some of its appeal may have been connected with the accounts of Charles Darwin's visit there in 1836; local records indicate that he spent several days in Weatherboard. He had been sailing on HMS *Beagle* via Cape Horn, the Chilean coast and the Galapagos Islands; the ship stopped in Sydney for some time, before returning to London, via Mauritius and Cape of Good Hope.³⁰ While staying at Weatherboard, Darwin walked across to the Jamison Valley to view its intriguing geology, flora and fauna.³¹ Especially given the heated debates that arose through the latter half of the nineteenth century in response to Darwin's research, it is hard not to imagine how exciting it must have been for an intelligent, inquisitive, loved, little boy to be able to spend time in such a wondrous environment, albeit one that was also dangerous, with precipitous cliffs and slippery stones. Virtually an only child, it is also likely that he was able to eavesdrop on all sorts of conversations, both on the

²⁶ The Blue Mountains Library website gives some overview:

<https://bluemlocalstudies.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/katoomba-street-history-walk/>

²⁷ Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 17. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁸ Green, *Prehistorian*, 5.

²⁹ <https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5045260> Viewed 22 Feb, 2022.

³⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³¹ Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researches Into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited During the Voyage of HMS "Beagle" Round the World, Under the Command of Capt. Fitz Roy*. (John Murray, 1860b), 431-446.

long train journeys to and from the Mountains, and perhaps when his adult siblings or maternal uncle visited (if uncle Alexander did).

The young Childe may also have been able to listen to the conversations between the architect, Jackson, and his clients, the Childes, who had provided Jackson with his first commissions in five years – for two very different sites.³² As with any talented architect, Jackson designed with the specifics of the site in mind, as well as the needs and interests of the clients.³³ Further, his original London training was oriented towards what became known as the Arts and Crafts Movement, associated with names such as William Morris and John Ruskin. It was both an aesthetic but also a philosophical appreciation that valued artisanal expertise and talent, over the banalities and profit motivation of the industrial production model. A further, articulated principle was the importance of using materials local to the site, in order to create an environment that was harmonious with its setting.³⁴

Further research is also required to disentangle the threads of the following decade, but it seems likely that both properties – the diocese mortgage-financed Rectory and the private, Wentworth Falls home, then known as Chalet Fontenelle – had been substantially completed by 1900.³⁵ From 1901 to 1906, the Reverend Stephen Childe took on an additional role – that of Rural Dean, suggesting that he had strengthened his connections with the Wentworth Falls community.³⁶ Towards the end of 1903, grandfather Alexander Gordon passed away at the age of 88 in Gloucestershire, Britain.³⁷ In March, 1904, Harriet Childe's brother, uncle Alexander Gordon, still based in New South Wales, took silk, appending KC to his name.³⁸

³² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³³ Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 66.

³⁴ Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 8-9; 65-67.

³⁵ Derricourt, "Radical archaeologist", 55; Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 37. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁶ Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 16. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁷ Cable, "Gordon Alexander (1815)".

³⁸ M Rutledge, "Gordon, Margaret Jane (1880-1962)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 14 October 2021, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gordon-margaret-jane-6431/text11001>.

Later in 1905, the 52 year old uncle Alexander Gordon KC, unexpectedly fell in love with a Welsh contralto, Margaret Thomas, who was touring Australia. He proposed, she accepted, and they travelled via ocean steamer back to England in 1906, so that they could be wedded in her family's local Calvinistic Methodist church in New Quay, Wales, on September 26, 1906.³⁹ Given that his mother, Annie Gordon was alive and (probably) residing in Gloucestershire, it seems likely that at the least, he and his fiancé/ wife would have visited her. The newly-married Gordons returned to Australia early in 1907. Later that year, Childe started his senior schooling at the prestigious Sydney Church of England Grammar School, locally known as 'Shore', having had private tuition until then. There is also a story that, prior to attending Shore, he had an extended bed-bound spell, afflicted by polio⁴⁰ but this is not supported by family sources.⁴¹ In October 1908, cousin Alexander Gordon was born. In April 1910, uncle Alexander Gordon became a Judge in the NSW Supreme Court.⁴²

A future dream – exploring the past

In his final year of secondary school, Childe was likely contemplating his career choices. On the evening of Friday, 1 July 1910, the University of Sydney's popular Professor Woodhouse gave a talk at its University Union. Prof. WJ Woodhouse was the curator of the University's archaeologically-oriented Nicholson Museum from 1903 and its Professor of Greek from 1901 to 1937. Although it is unlikely that Childe was physically at the talk, he likely read it within the next few days because it was reprinted in the following day's *Sydney Morning Herald*. In those days, most homes had a daily newspaper delivery. Woodhouse spoke eloquently and enthusiastically about the archaeological discoveries in Crete and their importance for Classical scholarship,

“... the modern magician's wand, the excavator's spade, has summoned before us the ghosts of the long dead past. ... The old saying, “Ex Oriente lux,” is found to be not the whole truth, nor, indeed, the half of it.”⁴³

³⁹ Rutledge, "Gordon". See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁰ Derricourt, “Radical archaeologist”, 55; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 8.

⁴¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴² Rutledge, "Gordon".

⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1910, p. 6. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

It is unclear at present whether Professor Woodhouse had personally visited Crete but it is possible; in 1908 he had revisited Europe, in part, to build the Museum's plaster sculpture collection but he already had personal connections with the British School at Athens (BSA), dating back to his time there in the mid-1890s. Prior to accepting the University of Sydney's Chair in Greek Studies, the English-born Woodhouse had completed his BA and MA at Queens College, Oxford (Childe's later College) and had done several research fellowships in Greece through the 1890s, based at the BSA.⁴⁴ His times there mostly coincided with those of one of his Oxford contemporaries, John Linton (JL) Myres, who, until his death in 1954, would remain an influential – though strangely shrouded – mentor of Childe from 1914 on. Myres, in turn, was mentored by Arthur John (AJ) Evans, who would later be appointed Examiner for Childe's BLitt thesis at Oxford.⁴⁵

Ex Oriente Lux

While still at school, Childe was showing a talent for ancient languages. In the coming months he would share first place in the state's matriculation examinations for Latin and score highly in Greek.⁴⁶ It is therefore possible that he was already dreaming about pursuing studies in what was then an emerging, cutting-edge new field – comparative philology. Further, it was already associated with tales of derring-do, exotic exploration and adventure. During the previous 130 years, various European scholars had combined unusual language skills, material evidence and creative leaps of insight, supported by rigorous collection and testing of evidence, to reveal unexpected linkages between different peoples. Each of these discoveries triggered a cascade of fresh understandings but also tantalising questions. A brief summary may provide some sense of how exciting the possibilities might have seemed to a young scholar.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, William Jones, an English jurist working in India, identified similarities between the subcontinent's ancient Sanskrit language, and the various

⁴⁴ Carl Henry Kaepffel, "W. J. Woodhouse", *The Australian Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 4, (1937): 79.

⁴⁵ This is detailed further in Chapter 6, *The Great War, 1914 - 1917*.

⁴⁶ 'Matriculation results for 1910', *University of Sydney Calendar 1911* (Angus and Robertson, 1911), 308-309, <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1911/1911.pdf>.

early European languages, leading to an hypothesised, source ‘Indo-European’ language.⁴⁷ Several decades later, the French scholar, Jean-François Champollion, combined an archaeological discovery – the Rosetta Stone – with his philological expertise, leading to the decipherment of the underlying meanings of ancient Egyptian imagery. The symbols became known as hieroglyphs and, as scholars subsequently developed their proficiency in reading them, vast amounts of fresh ‘historical’ information was revealed, confirming or refuting centuries of myth, misunderstanding and fact. A generation later, an English scholar-adventurer, HC Rawlinson, was able to discern the underlying ‘rules’ of another script, now called cuneiform, that had been cut into a Persian rockface. It had been used to describe the same series of events in three separate languages.⁴⁸ Over subsequent decades, the number of artefacts using cuneiform would grow exponentially, as more ancient civilisations and sites were recognised. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were archaic scripts and languages aplenty, but none of them were ‘European’. Europe remained stubbornly bereft of both early forms of writing, as well as refined, monumental architecture like the Egyptian pyramids or the palaces of Nineveh. Thus, an ‘*ex Oriente lux*’ hypothesis developed, championed by Montelius, positing with more or less ardour that ‘civilisation’ had arisen in ‘The East’, gradually flowing towards the unsophisticated tribes – the savages – of early Europe.⁴⁹ Based upon the available evidence, it was, nonetheless, challenging for Imperial subjects who believed in an inherent European superiority.

Interpretive models – revolution and evolution

By 1911, the concept of ‘revolution’ – in the sense of a perpetual, celestial cycle – was a popular metaphor, drawing upon a longstanding thread of ‘Oriental’ philosophies that proposed that life in general and civilisations in particular were subject to inevitable decline and death, followed by a florescence of fresh life. This concept was referenced by the famous Egyptologist, Flinders Petrie, who had built a stellar career through the late

⁴⁷ Robert H. Robins, “The life and work of Sir William Jones” *Transactions of the Philological Society* 85, no. 1 (1987): 1-3. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁸ https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=bisitun_inscription

⁴⁹ Timothy Champion, “Egypt and the Diffusion of Culture,” in *Views of Ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte*, ed David Jeffreys. (Routledge, 2011), 141; V. Gordon Childe, “The Orient and Europe” in *Report of the 108th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: 1938*. (Office of the British Association Burlington House, 1938), 183-190.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, he had developed meticulous, methodical processes of archaeological excavation that paid heed to the 'strata' of the site.⁵¹ Co-opted from earlier geological principles, stratification posited that, mostly speaking, distinguishable strata that overlaid earlier ones came about as an accretion of later events and processes. Building upon a body of typologies (types or categories) of artefacts associated with a particular stratum, Petrie's extended field excavation experience also led him to formulate principles of seriation, that is, the changing characteristics over time of particular typologies. Given the limited dating options of the era, stratification, typologies and seriation were useful tools for building *relative* chronologies around who was where when, doing what and how. Thus, as a growing body of textual fragments were identified and deciphered, the hope was to triangulate data from across a corpus, to arrive at *absolute* dates. Notably, until the identification and decipherment of other ancient languages, the Old Testament had been used to derive chronologies, supplemented by other extant texts in Ancient Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic.

Contemporaneously, science was also embracing concepts of 'evolution', arising initially from Darwin's 1859 treatise, *On the Origin of Species*, and further explored in his *The Descent of Man* in 1871, where he applied evolutionary principles specifically to humans. Superficially, the principles could be misapplied to support the notion of Caucasian superiority over other 'races'. Darwin posited that *biological* life evolved from simple to more complex forms over the course of multiple generations, and that physical traits which better enabled survival and thus reproduction were more likely to be passed on to progeny, while traits that were not life affirming would fade away.⁵² This has often since been paraphrased as 'survival of the fittest'.⁵³

Although Darwin's theory was based upon biological observations, it was soon co-opted as a metaphor for 'cultural evolution', implying that currently dominant cultures must be the

⁵⁰ William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *The revolutions of civilisation* (Harper & Brothers, 1911), 5, 9-10. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵¹ Joseph Alexander MacGillivray, *Minotaur : Sir Arthur Evans and the archaeology of the Minoan myth* (Hill and Wang, New York, 2000), 77.

⁵² Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species*, 1859 (John Murray, 1860a), 84-87, 293-299.

⁵³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

‘fittest’, and therefore ‘deserving’ of their superior socio-economic power.⁵⁴ LH Morgan is credited with formulating a (pseudo) ‘evolutionary’ hierarchy of cultural lifeways in his 1877 treatise, *Ancient Society*, in which he proposed a ‘ladder’ of human cultural development, from ‘savage’ to ‘barbarian’ to ‘civilised’.⁵⁵ The framework resonated for many scholars, who were to explore or challenge various aspects of it in subsequent decades.⁵⁶ By 1914, the innuendoes of its terms – ‘savagery’, ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilisation’ – were acknowledged as problematic; in his Sydney Address for the 84th Congress of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS), Im Thurn opened, “unfortunately it seems now too late to substitute any term of less misleading suggestion for that word ‘savagery’”.⁵⁷ Notably, a key aspect of the stages of this and related models, such as ‘hunter-gatherer to shepherd (pastoralism), to farmer (sedentism and agriculture)’ is that they imply that human societies necessarily move from one ‘stage’ to the next, more ‘sophisticated’ one. Ethnographic research was soon to provide many case studies that debunked these assumptions, especially by the 1920s.⁵⁸

European civilisation

Thus, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a persistent cognitive dissonance prevailed, between the physical evidence of archaic, ‘superior’ Oriental civilisations, and the expectations of a more complex European culture. At this time, Oriental meant anything east of the eastern border of Greece. Fortuitously, an attractive solution appeared – the archaeological discovery of an ancient, sophisticated civilisation on the Mediterranean island of Crete that had thrived over three thousand years earlier.⁵⁹ Not only did it locate an early society – with monumental architecture – within the bounds of the European Mediterranean, but it included evidence of writing that (likely) predated both

⁵⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁶ Powell, JW, “From Barbarism to Civilization.” *American Anthropologist* 1, no. 2 (1888): 123. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁷ *Report of the Eighty-fourth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: Australia 1914* (John Murray, 1915), 515. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁹ Champion, “Childe and Oxford,” 18-19.

the Mycenaean culture of mainland Greece (approx. 1600 – 1100 BCE) and the epics of Homer (approx. 800 BCE).

The story of the archaeological discovery is, of course, much more complicated but the summary, partially publicised at the time, gave AJ Evans the credit for unearthing the previously unknown, Minoan culture of ancient Crete. Evans combined an intellectual heritage in archaeology via his father and his own scholarship, with especial confidence in his own abilities and sheer persistence, along with the additional good fortune and financial connections to be able to eventually buy the site of Knossos.⁶⁰ In 1893, following his own intuition about the archaeological importance of Crete, he had advised his young protégé, JL Myres, who had just visited Petrie's excavation sites in Egypt, to include the Cretan area in his regional surveys.⁶¹

Arriving in Crete soon after, Myres was shown ceramic sherds from Crete's Kamares Caves. Drawing upon his new familiarity with the typologies and seriation of Petrie's artefacts, he was able to state that the sherds matched those of Petrie's sites. Thus, they could be used to confirm the both the antiquity of the site, and that interaction had occurred with the contemporaneous Egyptian culture.⁶² Subsequently, Evans made his first visit to Crete some months later in 1894 and, with assistance from various scholars, identified areas of archaeological interest around Knossos.⁶³ The identification and excavation of the so-called Minoan civilisation was to become Evans' main scholarly focus in the decades to come. By November 1896, he delivered a paper to London's Hellenic Society, outlining the importance of early Cretan scripts as evidence of an early European civilisation.⁶⁴ Two years later, after experiencing a brief but intense civil conflict, Crete passed from Turkish/Ottoman control to Greek political allegiance.⁶⁵ Thereafter, Cretan site purchase and

⁶⁰ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 42, 164.

⁶¹ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 81, 105.

⁶² MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 109-112. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶³ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 116-121. Contemporaneous texts use various spellings for Cnossos, Knosos, Gnossos, but rarely the modern anglicised form, 'Knossos'.

⁶⁴ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 132, 153-154. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁵ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 158.

excavation agreements were concluded more easily, allowing Evans to return there often for the remainder of his life.

Although Professor Woodhouse did not make reference to the undeciphered Minoan *scripts* in that 1910 talk, or at least the portion that was reported in the newspaper, he was likely familiar with their existence. Evans had begun presenting papers on his Cretan discoveries, including the identification of two ancient scripts, now known as Linear A and Linear B, to the British scientific community, even before he was able to conclude the purchase of the Knossos site after Crete's civil war.⁶⁶

Disruptions and responses

Only a few weeks later in 1910, Childe's mother died – not at home in the North Sydney Rectory but at Wentworth Falls, in the middle of the Australian winter, during school term time. The cause of her death is currently unknown. In spite of the distressing events of that year, Childe completed his Matriculation year with some distinction and enrolled for an Arts degree, focussing on Classics at Sydney University, commencing in March of 1911.⁶⁷

The extent or not of philosophical accord and general amity between the twice widowed Reverend Stephen Childe and (uncle) Judge Alexander Gordon is unclear at present. It is also not currently known whether Childe stayed at his uncle's home in Elizabeth Bay, an affluent suburb on the University side of the harbour, from the commencement of his university studies or only in the later years. Given the complications of daily commuting – catching ferries across the harbour – it made some practical sense for Childe to reside with his uncle and his family. From his uncle's home, Childe could catch trams to the University of Sydney or, time allowing – about one hour – indulge in his preference for walking there through the undulating terrain. It was likely also a cheerful environment, as his uncle and aunt were enthusiastic patrons of various arts, sporting and social service organisations. Margaret Gordon also maintained her Welsh bilingualism by becoming involved with local Welsh groups.⁶⁸ Further, it may have been Childe's first experience of living with toddlers –

⁶⁶ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 116, 132.

⁶⁷ *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, x.

⁶⁸ Rutledge, "Gordon".

initially, his cousin Alexander Gordon and, in the second year of his Arts degree, his cousin Anne.

While it might seem likely that an early twentieth century judge, living in an elegant suburb, alongside professional peers, would necessarily be conservative in his views, this was probably not the case and warrants further research. The unique circumstances of the antipodean communities allowed talented people from diverse socio-economic origins to attain positions of trust and influence. Further, their presence enriched the *existing* ranks of various professions, helping to foster understanding, insights and an appreciation of diversity between colleagues. Though likely to be undiscoverable at this point in time, the reading matter on the shelves of the Gordon home might provide fascinating insights.

Chapter 4

Sydney, 1911 to 1914

Having explored key aspects of Childe's antipodean background and the imprecise mosaic of his paternal and maternal family, we now need to interrogate his academic milieu to more fully address the first portion of the research question, 'given Childe's background and the scholarly expectations for his future...'. The primary evidence continues to be sparse; therefore, the analysis requires triangulation and inference. One especially useful source has been the University of Sydney Calendars. In that era, they had a wealth of detail that is no longer available in similar publications. These have been supplemented by other archival sources such as student magazine reports.

Childe entered the University of Sydney in 1911. Like other Australian universities of the time, it had four Faculties – Arts, Science, Medicine and Law; aspiring legal practitioners commenced their studies in Arts Faculty, transferring to the Law Faculty after their third year of study. Economics, at that time, was a Diploma course, along with Commerce. The Arts Faculty offered a range of courses which included many that we would currently classify as 'science', such as Mathematics, Geology, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and so on; at that time, the Faculty of Science focussed upon applied skills that would be required in future professions such as Engineering. Other 'traditional' Arts subjects included English, History, Philosophy, Logic, Latin, (Classical) Greek and the modern European languages of French and German.¹ Notably, there were no specific courses at the University of Sydney in Archaeology, Anthropology, Philology, Psychology or even Ancient History, so students who wanted to develop professional expertise in these subjects were reliant upon personal or public libraries, and teachers who could extend a subject's standard curriculum with additional material.

¹ *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, vi.

In 1911, just over eighty students were to pass their First Year Examinations in the Arts Faculty, of whom around 29% were female.² Several subjects – Latin, English and Mathematics – had large cohorts, with fifty or more students enrolled. Other subjects, like Greek, had barely a dozen students.³ Especially in the smaller classes, where contact was frequent, predictable and relatively intimate, multiple dynamics could be expected. On one hand, there was the inherent potential for competition between well-matched rivals – ranked results were published continuously. However, potential rivalry could be attenuated by various factors including the shared interest in a particular subject, the camaraderie arising from shared external interests and values, the natural rapport or its absence between individuals, the varied socio-economic backgrounds of the students and, of course, the interactions with the teachers.

During Childe's first year at the University of Sydney, he took several classes with Harry André (HA) Henry, a young man who was to figure in surprising ways later in Childe's life. In spite of the distress of losing his mother only months before his Matriculation exams, Childe had scored slightly better than Henry in Latin and Greek, while his French result was on a par with Henry's English result; they were both slightly bested in most subjects by John Roscoe (JR) Nield.⁴ By the First Year Examinations, Childe had equalled Nield in Latin and scored fractionally better in Greek. Nield, however, did better overall that year, also attaining a High Distinction in History. Nevertheless, this was just the beginning of a long scholarly rivalry. Henry had a less successful academic year, although he got a Distinction in Latin.⁵

Like Childe, Henry had had some challenges in his early life; he was orphaned in France, having been born to a French father, Lucien Felix Henry, who had only returned to France a few years earlier after spending twelve years in Sydney as a practising artist and teacher. The former communard left Sydney without his wife and with one of his former students,

² University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 1912* (Angus and Robertson, 1912), 326, <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1912/1912.pdf> See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴ *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, 308-309.

⁵ *University of Sydney Calendar 1912*, 325-330.

Frances Broadhurst.⁶ Frances died in Paris following birthing complications. She was the daughter of Sydney's Edward Broadhurst, QC.⁷ When Lucien Henry's death was imminent, the impecunious sculptor entrusted his young son to a guardian, Elizabeth Kenny; somehow, Henry ended up in Sydney and attended Sydney Grammar School, another prestigious boys school, on the CBD side of the harbour.⁸ Many details here remain puzzling and it would be interesting to know more about Henry, who later went to the NSW Bar, after serving in the British Army in France and Salonika from 1914 to 1917, and then the British Air Force in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia from 1917 to 1918.⁹

At present, even less is known about JR Nield. He apparently came from a working class family and won scholarships to the University of Sydney and the residential college, St Andrews.¹⁰ Thwarted in his ambition to become an archaeologist after he missed out on the 1914 NSW Rhodes Scholarship and – probably – the 1914 Cooper Graduate Scholarship, he moved to the Law Faculty.¹¹ In 1916, he volunteered for overseas duty with the Australian Infantry Forces (AIF) serving mostly in France, before returning to Australia around the middle of 1919. He was called to the NSW Bar in 1926 and unsuccessfully stood for the NSW Parliament in 1927, losing to the electorate's Labor candidate by 37 votes. He subsequently became a Lecturer in Roman Law at the University of Sydney in the early

⁶ Terry Irving and Rowan J. Cahill, *Radical Sydney: places, portraits and unruly episodes* (University of NSW Press, 2010), 74.

⁷ JM Bennett, "Broadhurst, Edward (1810-1883)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 6 August 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/broadhurst-edward-3057/text4503> .

⁸ A McMartin, "Henry, Lucien Felix (1850-1896)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 6 August 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henry-lucien-felix-3755/text5913> .

⁹ https://nswbar.asn.au/uploads/pdf-documents/Henry_Harry_Andre_.pdf

¹⁰ *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, 459; *University of Sydney Calendar 1912*, 481; University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 1913* (Angus and Robertson, 1913), 478, <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1913/1913.pdf>

¹¹ University of Sydney Archives, Rhodes Scholarship – NSW Selection Committee, S93, Item 1, Minute Book 1904-1939, 9 December 1913, 46-50.

1930s. Soon after, he was appointed a District Court Judge and in 1954 he became a Judge of the Supreme Court.¹²

First friendships

Although both Childe and Henry took Geology I in their first year, neither did very well but it was possibly their first meeting with the slightly older Raymond Gosford (RG) Watt, son of a Congregationalist minister, and another student who would unexpectedly reappear in Childe's later life.¹³ Childe and Watt achieved similarly ordinary results in their Mathematics I class, and this was probably the first place that they met the much older Frank Edgar (FE) Pulsford, who had enrolled in the Economics and Commerce faculty as a 38-year old, and would later be ordained.¹⁴ Pulsford was also taking English I; academically, he was eclipsed in the subject by Henry, who would achieve better results in English classes throughout his time at the University of Sydney. Hessel Duncan (HD) Hall was another stellar English student, although slightly older than Childe and Henry. Born in Glen Innes, in rural NSW, and the son of a Methodist minister, he would later join Childe at Oxford.¹⁵

At present, there are few records beyond shared subjects, timetables and teachers, to illuminate the evolving connections that would form a substrate that nourished future resources, beliefs and choices. Nevertheless, careful inquiry indicates that, rather than mere happenstance, those *later* interactions were built upon foundations of trust that had already been forged in earlier years. As First Year students in 1911, Childe, Henry and Nield would start at 9am on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday with their Latin lecture, usually conducted by Assistant Lecturer, Dr. Frederick Augustus (FA) Todd. Dr. Todd had completed his BA Hons at the University of Sydney before travelling, in 1901, on the Woolley

¹² <https://researchdata.edu.au/john-roscoe-nield-llb-bd/145467> See also <http://www.luders.id.au/personal-histories/memories/>

¹³ Nicholas Brown, "Enacting the international: RG Watt and the League of Nations Union," *Transnational Ties* (2008): 77. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁴ Brown, "RG Watt and the League", 79; Terry Irving, *The fatal lure of politics: the life and thought of Vere Gordon Childe* (Monash University Publishing, 2020), 39-42; *University of Sydney Calendar 1912*, 456.

¹⁵ BH Fletcher, "Hall, Hessel Duncan (1891-1976)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 19 December 2021, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hall-hessel-duncan-10394/text18417> ; University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 1916* (Angus and Robertson, 1916), <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1916/1916.pdf>, 332.

Scholarship to Jena, Germany to undertake his PhD.¹⁶ After returning to a teaching position at the University of Sydney, he taught some gifted Classics students and engaged attentively with various University committees and other activities. From the outset of the War in August 1914, he also became a military interpreter, a role renamed assistant censor in 1916.¹⁷

In the following hour, at 10am, five days a week, Childe, Watt and Pulsford would have their Mathematics class, and at 11am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Childe, Henry, Watt and Nield attended their Greek lectures, usually with Professor William John (WJ) Woodhouse. Professor Woodhouse seems to have been an important intellectual mentor in both Childe's and Nield's lives, most likely, also introducing them to archaeology as an academic discipline with its perspective on the value of material analysis. During the 1890s in Greece, Woodhouse had been involved in the archaeological excavation of a huge ancient amphitheatre, known as Megalopolis. Under the leadership of Ernest A. Gardner, Woodhouse and his colleagues William Loring and GC Richards, published journal papers and a book, primarily with funding support from the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies.¹⁸ This Society also published the peer-reviewed journal, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, which would later publish Childe's first archaeological paper. Thereafter, Woodhouse's archaeological research in Greece led to the publication, in 1897, of a highly regarded book on a remote region of the country known as Aetolia.¹⁹ An extraordinary researcher, Woodhouse used a pioneering photographic technology based around glass plates, taking hundreds of photographs of various aspects of the country, its peoples, and its coastline during his early years in Greece. It seems likely that he would have shown these to his students, especially those that had a specific interest in archaeology.

After being offered the Professorship in Sydney around 1900, Woodhouse, his parents and his siblings migrated to Australia and established a home in the Blue Mountains. In 1903, he also took on the Honorary Curatorship of the University's archaeologically-oriented

¹⁶ *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, 265.

¹⁷ Dunston 1990; *University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, 108-109.

¹⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁹ Kaepfel 1937:79-80. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Nicholson Museum and it is reasonable to think that his students, especially the talented and enthusiastic ones, would have spent time with the museum collections.²⁰ Thus far, however, there is no physical evidence of this, although further inquiry may reveal more.²¹ Similarly, like his colleague, the Assistant Lecturer for Latin, Dr Todd, Professor Woodhouse was actively involved with various University committees and, sometime after the Great War started, he too provided services as a translator to the NSW Censor's Office.²²

On Monday and Wednesday mornings in 1911, Childe then went straight into his next lecture at noon, Geology I, with HA Henry and RG Watt.²³ The lectures would (most likely) have been given by the Welsh-born Professor Edgeworth David. Professor David had originally studied Classics at Oxford, intending to later be ordained like his father. Ill health and a return voyage to Melbourne, Australia in 1879, however, led to him discovering an interest in geology. Several years later, in 1882, he was offered a surveying position with the NSW government and voyaged to the colony. In May, 1891, he accepted the Geology chair at the University of Sydney and in 1896, he and his wife and children established a family home in the Blue Mountains at Woodford, a hamlet four stops before Wentworth Falls on the train line from Sydney. Like his academic colleagues, Professor Woodhouse and Dr. Todd, he participated whenever possible in various University committees, although his availability was limited as he spent more time overseas than most other academic staff.²⁴ Unlike some of his younger academic colleagues, Professor David undertook active service overseas during the Great War. He also personally supported the idea of Conscription even though this was not popularly accepted by the broader Australian electorate.

A curiosity is that prior to 1911, Childe does not appear to have had any close friendships or involvements with peer group activities, whether sports-related or with any other mutual

²⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²² War Service of Students of the School 1914–1919, *The Annual of the British School at Athens*. Cambridge University Press, vol. 23, pp. viii-xiii. <https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/annual-of-the-british-school-at-athens/article/war-service-of-students-of-the-school-19141919/871D214A7DD8C72BB92A995137679F85>, viewed 20 October 2021.

²³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

interest. This might be an inevitable distortion arising from patchy records, however, it is in interesting contrast with the rest of his life which featured enduring friendships with unusually influential people, and energetic involvements with various activist groups. Whether this was a product of university friendships or additional mentoring from uncle Alexander Gordon is unclear. It is also notable that in later life, Childe's elderly father publicly defended his son's interests, suggesting that they may have remained close in spite of apparently differing political positions. This is another aspect that deserves further critical inquiry, especially in the context of Childe's apparently congenial relationship with his paternal uncle, the Canon, in London.²⁵

Kindred spirits

From 1912 on, Childe seems to have become more actively involved with campus activities, in particular, the Christian Union, a predominantly Protestant organisation, affiliated with an extensive international network of evangelically-oriented groups. The other (known) significant events at this time were the birth of his cousin, Anne Gordon, the Philosophy classes that he began with Professor Francis Anderson, the beginning of his lifelong friendship with Herbert Vere (HV) Evatt and the remarriage of his father at the age of 68 to a younger English woman, Monica Gardiner.²⁶ Little is known about her background or how long she had been in Australia. It is unclear if Childe was already involved with the University's Christian Union at the beginning of 1912, but if not, then the involvement may have been consolidated via the Philosophy I classes, taught by Scottish trained Professor Anderson.

Philosophy I's curriculum was an idiosyncratic mix of formal logic studies and psychology, then an emerging field without any lectureships. The traditional philosophical tools of logical analysis were supplemented by an exploration of psychological findings and their bearing on logic and ethics; in the 1912 syllabus, a review of statistical methods was added. The class met Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 2pm; Childe and RG Watt were both joined in this class by HV Evatt, a first year student who had matriculated brilliantly in

²⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

1911.²⁷ After his spectacular Matriculation results, the academically gifted HV Evatt had won scholarships to the University of Sydney and its residential college of St Andrews.²⁸ Though slightly younger than Childe, Evatt and Childe seem to have had a natural rapport, sharing similar interests in social justice, politics and economics. By the end of the 1912 year, Evatt achieved the top High Distinction (HD) and Lithgow Scholarship in Philosophy I, with Childe a close second and winning the Cooper III Scholarship, while Watt earned a Distinction.²⁹

In June 1912, FE Pulsford, who had become the Christian Union's Corresponding Secretary at the previous Annual General Meeting in October 1911, inaugurated a Social Service program (at the June 27th, 1912 meeting), delivering a speech with impressive clarity. It outlined a well-structured, inspiring strategy that encouraged students to personally familiarise themselves with the circumstances of the socio-economically disadvantaged, in order to be better able to develop more effective policies in the future.³⁰ At the Christian Union's following Annual General Meeting in October 1912, Pulsford would be re-elected as its Corresponding Secretary and the first year student, HV Evatt, would be elected as its Treasurer, a position he also held the following year.³¹

Thinking strategically

Childe's final undergraduate year at the University of Sydney was an important one. It seems likely that he already would have been contemplating the prospects for his future life, especially with regard to the possibilities of overseas study and exploration. The major scholarships potentially available to Classics students were the Rhodes, awarded annually, or the Woolley, awarded odd years and the 1907-founded Cooper or Barker Graduate scholarships, usually awarded even years. Given its additional criterion around sporting prowess, the Rhodes was unlikely, and the Barker, while open to Arts graduates, sought

²⁷ *University of Sydney Calendar 1912*, 110.

²⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁹ *University of Sydney Calendar 1913*, 342-343. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁰ "Christian Union Notes", *Hermes* vol XVII, October 1911, 95; Pulsford, "The University and Social Problems", *Hermes* vol XVIII, August 1912, 62-63; *University of Sydney Calendar 1912*, 550-551.

³¹ *University of Sydney Calendar, 1913*, 553.

special proficiency in Mathematics; thus, the 1914 Cooper Graduate Scholarship offered the best prospects.³² Importantly, it was dependent upon the University's Senate's acceptance of supportive reports from the Professors of Greek, Professor Woodhouse, Latin Professors Butler and Todd, and the elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor MacCallum.³³ If awarded the Cooper Graduate Scholarship, it was theoretically possible to undertake studies at any English university or even a European one, however, Oxford was the likely preference. The scholarship selection committees generally considered both the academic records of the applicants, as well as their contribution to 'University life' and the broader community.

It is unclear precisely when Childe became an active participant in the Christian Union's Social Service program, but by the middle of 1913, following a rousing address in support of the program by Professor Edgeworth David, University students who wished to participate were encouraged to contact Pulsford, or the program's Honorary Secretary, V. Gordon Childe.³⁴ Childe and Evatt also continued their philosophy studies with Professor Anderson, who is credited with introducing them to the Workers Education Association (WEA). They appear to have joined at this time.³⁵

Besides their ongoing involvement with the Social Service program of the Christian Union, Childe and Evatt continued their enthusiastic participation in Professor Anderson's Philosophy classes. By year's end, Childe was awarded the Professor Anderson Prize for a Third Year student, while Evatt received the Professor Anderson Prize for a Second Year student. It appears, however, that they took the same Philosophy III class; neither appears to have ever sat the Philosophy II examination.³⁶ The Philosophy III course focussed upon social and ethical issues, exploring how early twentieth century perspectives had evolved from preceding theory and circumstance.³⁷ In contemporary language, this might probe the

³² *University of Sydney Calendar, 1913*, 307-308.

³³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁴ "Social Problems and Social Service", *Hermes* vol XIX, June 1913, 31.

³⁵ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 39-43.

³⁶ *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 350-351; *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 355-356. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

relationships between intergenerational wealth, physical labour as a saleable resource, and State responsibilities around providing legislative protection and social services.

Childe and Evatt took an increasing interest in the progressive politics of the Labor Party. Their earliest confirmed involvement was volunteering for the NSW Labor Party in the December 1913 state election. Labor, led at that stage by WA Holman, went on to win.³⁸ This was probably their first exposure to the 'party machine'. Some years later, after returning to Australia from Oxford, Childe would be employed as Private Secretary to the then NSW Labor leader, J Storey. Several years further on, after Storey's death, Evatt would enter NSW State Parliament as the winning Labor candidate in Storey's old seat.³⁹ Eventually, Evatt would also write a biography of Holman.

Australia had also had a federal election in May, 1913 and it is likely that both Childe and Evatt would have been keen observers of its outcome. Having come of age – 21 years – just ten days before the election was called, Childe was eligible to vote.⁴⁰ This was Australia's first federal election in three years. In its earliest post-Federation years, Australia had had six Prime Ministers in only ten years, as one fragile coalition of minority parties collapsed after another but the 1910 Federal election had – finally – resulted in a clear majority vote. Spectacularly, the left-leaning Labor Party, led federally by Andrew Fisher, had won almost two thirds of the House of Representatives (lower house) seats. However, the 1913 federal election was to herald a return to parliamentary instability. The Commonwealth Liberal Party, led by Joseph Cook, won by only one seat. Less than fifteen months later, in June 1914, this government would be terminated in Australia's first ever double dissolution.

Childe and Evatt also engaged energetically in extra curricula university activities with their mutual friend, HA Henry, during 1913. Evatt and Henry were elected as representatives to the University Union in 1913, and in the 1913/ 1914 year, the Union's Finance, House, Debates, Billiard and Games, Reading Room and Archives, Tobacco and Tea Room

³⁸ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 34-39.

³⁹ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/electionresults18562007/HomePage.htm> viewed 19 August 2022.

⁴⁰ https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/election-dates.htm; contemporaneous Australian rules stated that new voters had seven days after writs to join the electoral roll.

management committees all included one or more of the trio.⁴¹ This implies an ongoing post-graduation, 1914 University involvement by Childe and Henry.⁴²

Scholarship applications

The relatively lucrative NSW Rhodes Scholarship provided a £300 pound per annum stipend for two years to study at Oxford, plus return travel on an ocean liner.⁴³ The less well-endowed Cooper paid a stipend of £150 per annum for two years according to the 1913 Calendar and did not include the return passage. This would require a separate application.⁴⁴ In 1913's Third Year Examinations, as in the 1911 First Year, Childe again equalled Neild in Latin but topped the Greek course. This time, however, he also attained Honours in Philosophy and was awarded the University Medal for Classics.⁴⁵ Five students were to apply for the NSW Rhodes Scholarship, including HA Henry, who declared an interest in the future study of law, and JR Neild, the aspiring archaeologist. Childe did not apply. The Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee, headed by Professor Edgeworth David, assessed the applications and formalised their decision on 9 December 1913. They awarded it to Henry as the better 'all round' applicant because he had supplemented his academic and athletic prowess with greater engagement in university life than the other candidates.⁴⁶

We know that Childe was awarded the Cooper Graduate Scholarship, however, no assessment documentation has survived so we cannot be sure who else applied or when the applications were reviewed. It seems likely, however, that the selection was made in December, after the Rhodes recipient had been finalised. Thus, it is likely that JR Neild would have applied as he would have known that he had been rejected for the Rhodes. If so, the Committee may have selected the philologist, Childe, over the archaeologist, Neild. Interestingly, in 1914, the Cooper stipend increased to £200 per annum, a welcome boon

⁴¹ "The New Management", *Hermes* vol XIX, November 1913, 88.

⁴² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴³ Portus, *Happy highways*, 110.

⁴⁴ *University of Sydney Calendar 1913*, 294.

⁴⁵ *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 355-357.

⁴⁶ University of Sydney Archives, Rhodes Scholarship – NSW Selection Committee, S93, Item 1, Minute Book 1904-1939, 9 December 1913, 46-50.

for its recipient.⁴⁷ Childe was also awarded one of the three annual return passages to England, travelling first class on the Orient line of steamers.

Having awarded Childe the Cooper Scholarship, increased its stipend and provided first class passage, the University's Council signalled confidence in the excellence of its student. It would be interesting to know if Childe, Nield, or Woodhouse on their behalf, had had any correspondence with the academic or administrative staff at Oxford, or specifically Queens College there, either during 1913, or prior to the 1914 departure from Australia. Perchance – or not – Childe and Henry both travelled on RMS *Orsova*, departing Sydney on 1 August 1914.⁴⁸

The birth of a Dominion Navy

In fact, from the perspective of newly-federated Australia, one other critically important event had occurred in October, 1913. After years of negotiation, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was officially born on 4 October 1913 and responsibility for the island-continent's naval defence was handed over from direct Imperial command. This was the first time that *any* of the British Empire's dominions had achieved an independent Navy. The country's newspapers – local, regional and interstate – were filled with accounts of the event, describing it as a 'never to be forgotten confirmation that the country had come of age'. Childe and his social milieu could not have been oblivious to this significant event, especially as uncle Alexander Gordon's Elizabeth Bay home was less than ten minutes walk from where the vessels were berthed for the festivities.⁴⁹ An entire week of special events had been planned, including opportunities for the public to board the new ships and inspect their cutting-edge technologies. Yet the celebration also encapsulates the paradox of the population's sense of antipodean self; on one hand it actualised the nation's sense of autonomy and self-reliance, but simultaneously, it reinforced the dominion's allegiance to the British Imperial centre. It is implausible that Childe, Evatt, Henry and their cohort had no opinion about this resonant event, that had been anticipated and debated for years.

⁴⁷ *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 293.

⁴⁸ "Homewards by the R.M.S. Orsova," *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW)*, 1 August 1914, 17.

⁴⁹ *The Sun*, 5 October 1913, 1.

mostly by volunteers, supplemented by retired Royal Navy (RN) personnel⁵⁰. From around 1887 on, negotiations ebbed and flowed around the long term relationship – and cost allocation – between the Imperial centre and the colonies. Britain, as a small island in the far northern hemisphere, had established an international Empire built on naval resources and communications strategies; these were of critical importance to the wealth of Britain, and the ongoing stability of its global network. Consequently, for some decades, it had designated several hubs as regional ‘Stations’ and these, in the event of conflict, would provide more localised logistical support.⁵¹ Originally, the Australian landmass was delegated to the ‘China Station’ but relatively early on, the ‘Sydney Station’ was established as a base for the RN and its Imperial Admiralty communications.⁵² The global economic turmoil of the 1890s, followed by Australia’s Federation in 1901 had mostly subsumed the negotiations but they were reinvigorated during that first decade, especially as naval defence had become a federal responsibility, rather than remaining a matter for the individual ‘states’. Thus, the discussions with the Imperial centre occurred against the backdrop of the decade’s volatile federal leadership of recombinant political coalitions and changing Prime Ministers.

The eventual outcome was a solution that was unique in the British Empire.⁵³ The pomp and ceremony surrounding the arrival of the Australian Squadron in Sydney Harbour on 4 October 1913 symbolised this. During earlier years, Australia had successfully argued that its Navy would require vessels with *offensive* capabilities, especially given that it was so far from other Imperial Stations.⁵⁴ Although the Australian faith in Britain’s commitment to the proposals suffered setbacks in the following years, Fisher’s 1909 government eventually

⁵⁰ AW Jose, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918. Volume IX–The Royal Australian Navy, 1914–1918*, (Halstead Press, 1941), xvii.

⁵¹ Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xviii-xx.

⁵² Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xxii; Jozef Straczek, *The origins and development of Royal Australian Naval signals intelligence in an era of imperial defence 1914-1945*, (PhD diss., University of NSW, 2008), 16-17.

⁵³ Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xli.

⁵⁴ Overlack, Peter, “German Assessments of British-Australian Relations, 1901-1914,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 50, no. 2 (2004): 196-197. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

placed orders for three British-built warships.⁵⁵ A further round of tensions arose in 1912, triggered by British distractions with the German naval build up. The Australians realised that Britain viewed earlier discussions as “indications” of future policy, rather than being “agreements”. Further, that Britain did not feel compelled to communicate its plans with Australia because it had little regard for the strategic value of the RAN. According to the Official Historian, when war was declared in 1914, the Australians were highly motivated to prove the worth of Australia’s new navy.⁵⁶

Geopolitical tensions

The launch of Australia’s navy coincided with the intensifying growth of geopolitical tensions. Just as in Britain, the Australian newspapers intermittently published reports and editorials warning of the imminent threats posed by a continuing German naval build up. This was of especial salience to the British Empire which relied upon its international maritime dominance. Similarly, the dominion of Australia recognised the economic importance of its own maritime links, along with its antipodean isolation. The earlier debates and controversies that had led to the creation of the RAN had also sensitised many to the proximity of German colonies then extant to the north east of the Australian landmass around New Guinea. This geographical sensitivity had fed into the federal bipartisan support for the country’s Universal Training Scheme, promulgated in 1911; it was felt to be a necessary, responsible component of self-defence. As all of the early twentieth century empires no longer exist, most of us have only a muddle of cinematic memories which befuddle our readings of contemporaneous accounts. In summary, there were six empires.

The **German** Colonial Empire, like those of Britain, France, and the earlier Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch Empires, was predicated upon establishing a global network of trading colonies, ideally with effective port facilities. Although the large, economically-mature European country was able to supplement its resources with those of several, non-contiguous, territorial colonies in the African continent, its key potential strength was the flexibility and thus resilience of its networked supply lines. In the decades prior to the Great

⁵⁵ DJ Murphy, “Fisher, Andrew (1862-1928)”, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 22 October 2021 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fisher-andrew-378/text10613> . See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁶ Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xxxvi-xl.

War, it had also established control over the northeast portion of New Guinea, just to the north of Australia, as well as several other Pacific archipelagos, providing links to ports in both East Asia and along the North and South Americas.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it was only from around 1909 that English-language newspapers began to report Germany's naval build up as a looming threat to Britain's maritime dominance; these concerns intensified in 1912.⁵⁸ With the declaration of war, the term, 'Triple Alliance', was originally used to designate the inimical, combined forces of the German, Austro-Hungarian and Italian Empires. It was an agreement originally established in the late nineteenth century. In contrast, newspapers of the day would refer to the British, French and Russian Empires' partnership as the 'Triple Entente', reporting that 'Germany's aggression towards Russia' had compelled the Triple Entente partners to invoke their pacts of defence.

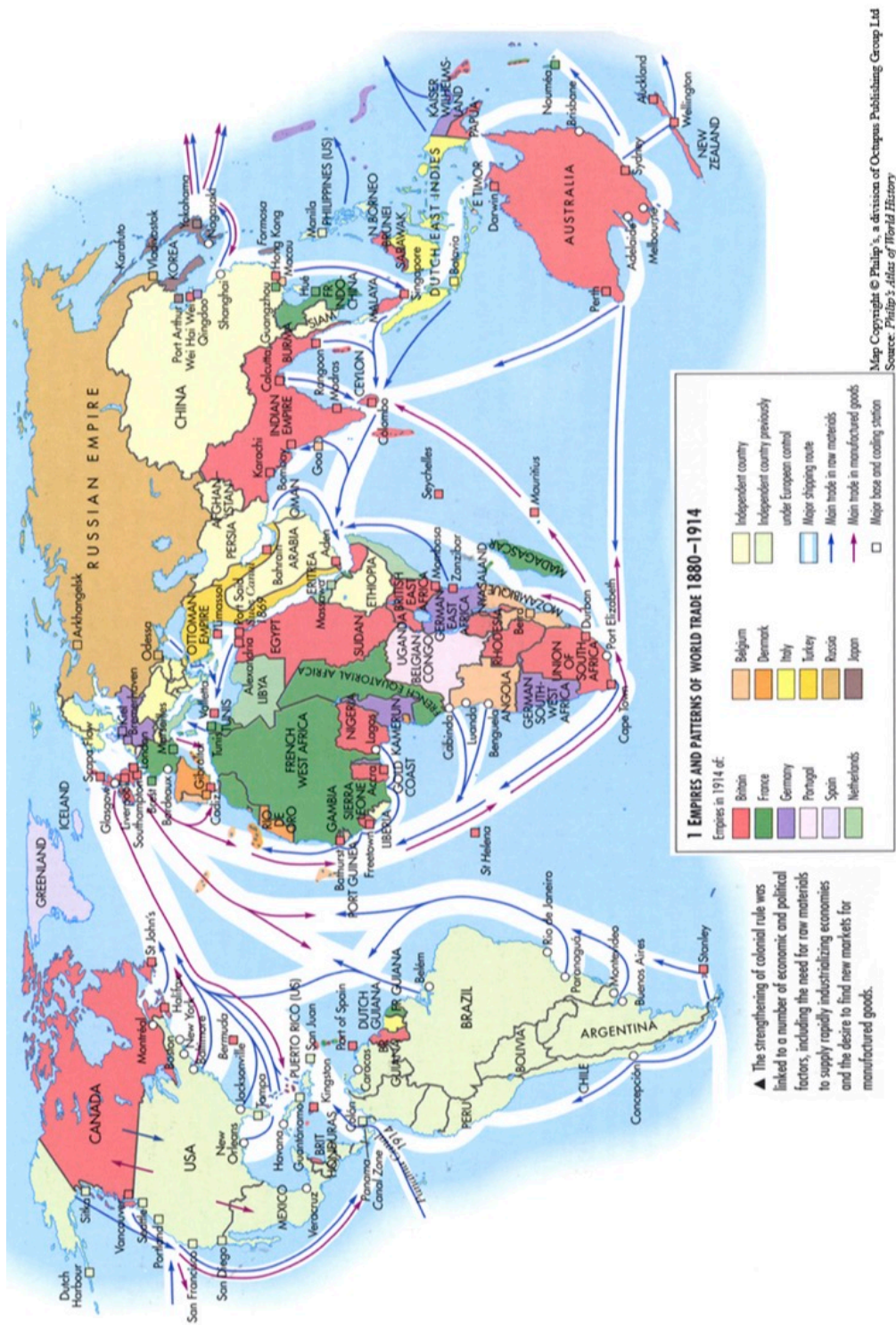
The **Austro-Hungarian** Empire was relatively short-lived, surviving barely fifty years although it had been preceded by the Austrian Empire. Besides including the monarchies of Austria and Hungary, the contiguous Eastern European expanse incorporated the southeast of modern Poland, the west of modern Ukraine, and some of the modern Balkan nations. It was culturally and linguistically heterogenous, with both a large 'peasant' class, as well as renowned urban centres of intellectual and artistic distinction, such as Vienna. It collapsed in the final months of the Great War.

The **Italian** Empire was of similarly recent origin; it had acquired a northeast African colony (Eritrea) in the late nineteenth century and wrested control of Libya from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. Once war was declared in 1914, however, it would elect *not* to join Germany, apparently fearing for its imported coal supplies. On 26 April 1915, it would further differentiate its position, secretly signing the Treaty of London which provided for Italy to take control of the coastal stretches of Albania and Croatia after a successful conclusion of the war by Britain.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Grey, *A military history of Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 86-87.

⁵⁸ Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁵⁹ René Albrecht-Carrié, "The present significance of the treaty of London of 1915," *Political Science Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1939): 364-367; Arthur J. May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London" *The Journal of Modern History* 29, no. 1 (1957): 44.



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Source: Philip's Atlas of World History

Figure 4.2: Empires and patterns of world trade, 1880-1914. <https://commons.princeton.edu/mg/empires-and-patterns-of-world-trade-1880-1914/>

The **Russian** Empire stretched across the northern latitudes, from Scandinavia in the west, south to the shores of the Black Sea, and to the Bering Strait in the east. It remained politically feudal; its czar and aristocrats were renowned for vast agricultural estates and an indentured labour force. It mostly lacked an industrial sector. In the decades approaching the war, the British and Russian Empires had negotiated treaties, bound by a mutual perception that Germany and its allies were a significant threat. Both had also concluded treaties with the French Colonial Empire.

Prior to the War, the **French** Empire had supplemented its resources in France with those of its expansive colonies across West Africa, along with some East Asian ones, and several islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The 'Oriental' (eastern) **Ottoman** Empire was an extensive, predominantly non-Christian, mostly geographically-contiguous, monarchical entity that included many languages, traditions and ethnicities. With Constantinople (Istanbul) as its capital, its borders swept around the eastern perimeter of Greece, north to the shores of the Black Sea, and south through the Levant and the coastlines of the Persian (Arabian) and Red Seas. By the early twentieth century, shortly before its demise, British newspapers would depict the Ottoman Empire as 'an ailing old man', to convey the sense that it was well past its prime.⁶⁰ Its territory was shrinking; for example, the Mediterranean island of Crete, surveyed by several of Childe's Oxford professors – Evans, Myres and Hogarth during the 1890s, had passed from Turkish to Greek control in 1898/1899.⁶¹ Similarly, the lands where the 'ancient civilisations' such as Egypt, Persia and the various Mesopotamian ones had arisen, were also increasingly asserting independence from Ottoman rule. In 1912, conflict broke out in the Balkan region north of Greece, resulting in formerly Ottoman territory being ceded to Bulgaria. This led to a subsequent Balkan conflict in 1913, along with various charges of 'secret diplomacy' around the war spoils. Until the disruptions of the Great War, Childe had hoped to research Indo-European language origins in this general region.

⁶⁰ Dina Rizk Khoury and Dane Keith Kennedy, "Comparing empires: the Ottoman domains and the British Raj in the long nineteenth century," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007): 233.

⁶¹ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 153-165.

Once war was declared, both Greece and the Ottoman Empire would initially declare their neutrality but by October 1914, the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany. Greece remained technically neutral although it strongly favoured Britain and her partners. Several months later, the British and their dominion troops, accompanied by French forces, would initiate the disastrous, extended 1915 campaign for Türkiye's Dardanelles peninsula and the Gallipoli region, in the strategic hope of securing naval access to the Black Sea and their ally, the Russian Empire. Throughout the War, Athens was to remain a busy entrepôt for nationals of many guises. In 1917, Greece abandoned the policy of neutrality, allying with Britain.

For Australia, the early twentieth century was still something of a colonialist childhood. People from elsewhere in the world – mostly Caucasian and often British – had flooded into this landmass. Childe and his university friends were mostly first-generation white Australians, whereas most of their teachers were immigrants – although willing ones. The country was groping its way towards a national identity that valued self-reliance and merit-based recognition and yet, this still coexisted with a deep, emotional loyalty to the British Empire, the British monarch, and a conception of 'British values'. We do not have unequivocal evidence that Childe, Evatt and Henry shared these sentiments but it is likely, and there is no evidence to the contrary for this pre-war period. The establishment of Australia's navy had been a long-term project which had been supported by multiple, (democratically elected) Australian governments – Australians were conscious of both their distance from imperial kin and exposure to potential invaders (Germans in this case).

Filling in 1914

The records of Childe's activities in 1914, prior to his scheduled departure in August, are sparse and slightly contradictory. Childe attended his April 1914 Graduation and remained reasonably involved with University Union activities for some months, even though not officially undertaking any coursework. There is some evidence that he spent time teaching, unsuccessfully, in regional NSW, sometime during May and June 1914. Coincidentally, this was in Glen Innes, the home town of his friend, HD Hall.⁶² In his 'Retrospect', written shortly before his death but published the following year, Childe stated that he "came to

⁶² Fletcher, "Hessell Duncan Hall"; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 45.

prehistory from comparative philology”.⁶³ In particular, he was inspired by the observation that many modern European languages seemed to share an ancient substrate with Sanskrit. Given that he was in Australia for the first seven months of 1914, it would seem possible that he might have used some of the time to further develop his philological skills, perhaps including Sanskrit. There is, however, no clear evidence of this.

Similarly, he might have wanted to deepen his archaeological knowledge. The University’s Fisher Library received a range of relevant, international journals, ranging from the German language publications such as *Mittheilungen des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Athenische Abtheilung*, to French ones such as *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, and various English journals including the *Journal for Hellenic Studies (JHS)* and *Man*, a peer-reviewed journal published twice a year by the Royal Anthropological Institute. Professor Woodhouse had personal connections with both the *JHS* and *Man*, via colleagues and research contemporaries at Oxford and the BSA in the 1890s. *Man* had an intentionally global remit, publishing papers that examined ethnographic, archaeological and religio-cultural observations and analysis from around the world. The disciplinary divide that was to develop during the 1920s, sharply separating anthropology and archaeology, did not yet exist.⁶⁴ Sadly, we have no evidence of archaeological inquiry, although it remains likely.

Intriguingly, the ‘University Clubs Etc’ section of the University of Sydney’s 1914 Calendar, states that Childe also became a Council member “for 1914-1915” of the Classical Association of New South Wales.⁶⁵ This catches the attention for several reasons. Firstly, that year its standard office holders were supplemented with some unusually prominent figures. Besides Sir William Cullen, the University’s Chancellor and the Chief Justice of New South Wales as its President, unusually for the times, it also had seventeen Vice-Presidents. The leading one was the Right Hon. Sir Edmond Barton, the inaugural Prime Minister of Australia at Federation of the Colonies in 1901. The next was His Honour Judge Backhouse (also Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney). The remaining Vice-Presidents were various academic staff or their spouses. Its Treasurer was Professor Woodhouse, while its

⁶³ Childe, “Retrospect,” 69.

⁶⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁵ *University of Sydney Calendar, 1914*, 566.

other Council members were less senior academic staff, including Dr. Todd. This suggests that Childe was trusted with unusual access to influential people. In earlier Calendars, such as that for 1911, the Association had a much smaller group of office holders (1910-1911), although these still included Sir William Cullen (then the Vice-Chancellor), Professor Woodhouse and Dr Todd.

Secondly, in the 1914 Calendar –in contrast to earlier years – the Classical Association has no description of its activities and in the Calendar for the following year, 1915, the multiplicity of office holders was attributed solely to 1914. By itself, this might have a prosaic explanation such as a printing oversight or perhaps even a response to the outbreak of war but when taken with the other oddities, it is curious. In earlier Calendars, the Association did have a clear purpose – its role was to encourage classical teaching and to provide opportunities for relevant discourse. It was further charged with meeting “not less than four times a year”, and its membership fees included the publications of its affiliate, the Classical Association of England. After 1915, the Association appears to no longer exist. For unknown reasons, 1914 was a unique year for the Association.

Other costs of opportunity

In spite of his exciting international prospects, Childe may also have felt some chagrin about what he would be missing. After a proposal in 1909, the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) had decided to have, for the first (and only) time, their 1914 meeting in the recently federated, self-governing dominion of Australia. The 84th Meeting was scheduled to take place in multiple cities across the island continent and the new, Australian government had agreed to contribute £10,000 towards the fares and accommodation of around 150 delegates, including many of Britain’s top scientists and their immediate families.⁶⁶ There would be public lectures in Perth, then Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, along with ceremonies to bestow honorary doctorates in each major city, as well as programs of research, experiments and cultural exploration. The detailed planning had started in earnest in the latter half of 1912; this included appointing coordinating committees in each state. Professor Edgeworth David, the Welsh-born head of the University of Sydney’s Geology department and an internationally renowned Antarctic

⁶⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

explorer and raconteur, was appointed the NSW Chairman.⁶⁷ Like thousands of other Australians, Childe's uncle Alexander Gordon and his wife, Margaret, had purchased the special, temporary memberships for this salubrious event. They planned to attend Sydney's public BAAS events, later in August 1914.⁶⁸

And in mid-1914, a black swan event occurred in Australia – the very first double dissolution.⁶⁹ This was a Constitutional article which allowed – in exceptional circumstances – for *both* Houses of federal Parliament to be dissolved and a fresh election called. The conservative, 1913, Cook-led federal government with its fragile majority, had been paralysed by intransigent tensions in the early months of 1914. This came to a head in June 1914. Soon after the arrival in Australia of the new Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, Prime Minister Cook sought assent from the British monarch's representative, to dissolve both Houses of Parliament and hold a fresh election.⁷⁰ After various discussions through June 1914, the Governor-General prorogued the federal Parliament on 29 June 1914 and dissolved it on 30 July 1914. The resultant election was scheduled for 5 September 1914.⁷¹ Initially, it was assumed that the Conservative parties would win a clear majority in both federal Houses. In fact, later in the year, the Labor Party were returned with a clear majority and its federal leader, Andrew Fisher, the self-declared socialist, was once again the Prime Minister.

⁶⁷ *Report of the Eighty-fourth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: Australia 1914* (John Murray, 1915), 681.

⁶⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁰ Herbert Vere Evatt, "Australia on the Home Front 1914-1918," *The Australian Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1937): 68-69.

⁷¹ https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/election-dates.htm

Chapter 5

August 1914 – changes and concealments

On August 1, 1914, V. Gordon Childe departed Sydney on the Orient Line's RMS *Orsova* as a recipient of the University's annual fare endowment for financially challenged but talented students.¹ He travelled first class. The University of Sydney's other 1914 Orient recipients were HH Thorne, a Mathematics student and holder of the Barker Graduate Scholarship, and Childe's slightly older friend, HD Hall, who in 1927 would eventually take up a role with the nascent League of Nations in Geneva.² Childe was, however, able to share this eventful journey with at least one of his university peers – HA Henry.³ As student colleagues of long standing, they may even have shared a cabin although for now, there is no evidence to confirm or refute the possibility.

The extraordinary timing of this journey presents an ideal opportunity to apply methodologies that have been developed in life-writing and microhistory. The journey coincided with the declaration of war, the presence of many of Britain's top scientists in Australia and also the country's first ever double dissolution. While many conventional sources of data – letters by or to Childe, his family and his friends, key shipping documents, photographs and the like are absent – there is a rich array of newspaper reports and other travel diaries that, when analysed together, can reveal itineraries, public sentiment and simultaneous events. Thus, a systematic and forensic examination of these data sources can yield new insights into the critical formative influences on Childe at this time and also expose important lacunae in the extant scholarship, which has tended to assume that the Great War had little impact upon Childe.⁴

¹ "Homewards by the R.M.S. Orsova," *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW)*, 1 August 1914, 17; *University of Sydney Calendar 1915*, 334. Also Irving, *Fatal lure*, 45. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³ *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW)*, 1 August 1914, 17.

⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Childe's travelling companion was HA Henry, recipient of the University of Sydney's 1914 Rhodes Scholarship. This award included his travel to Oxford and it is plausible that they booked their RMS *Orsova* journey together. Childe was bound, with his Cooper Graduate Scholarship, for Oxford's Queens College, alma mater of Professor Woodhouse, while Henry would be joining Oxford's New College, as did many of NSW's Rhodes scholars over the years.⁵ Three other passengers from Australia were also continuing on to the University of Oxford after the *RMS Orsova* docked in Britain's port of Plymouth.⁶

The journey by steamship to the other side of the world took around six weeks between Sydney and London. We currently have no indications of what activities Childe intended to pursue during this long voyage but it seems likely that he would expect to use the time purposefully.⁷ Similarly, we have no information relating to HA Henry's intended activities during the voyage.

International tensions

A factor that attracts little scholarly attention, is the impact of the escalating international political tensions on the broader Australian community, and in particular, on the young, gifted scholars who were travelling to the other side of the world to take up scholarships. In this era before the internet, before television, before radio broadcasts, before private telephones, the newspapers of the time shaped public perceptions of what was happening in the world, and what it 'meant'. Thus, the curated newspaper content was avidly devoured by much of the public. The morning papers were regarded as sufficiently important, that it was expected of all reputable hotels to deliver them each morning to their guests' doors or breakfast tables. Sydney's main daily newspapers at that time were the relatively progressive *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a more conservative publication.⁸

⁵ <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholars-volunteers/rhodes-scholar-database/>

⁶ T. Champion, pers. comm. 12 May 2022.

⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Saturday, 1 August 1914 – Friday, Greenwich time

The intensifying international tensions had been reported by both papers throughout July, 1914. By Saturday, 1 August, the *Daily Telegraph's* news section had "MOBILISING" as its major heading, then subheadings to outline the positions of Britain, Japan, Austria, Germany, France, Russia, Canada and Australia⁹, while the *Sydney Morning Herald* went with "THE WAR ... ALL EUROPE", reporting that coded messages had, the day before, been passing between Melbourne's Naval House and the Admiralty, London.¹⁰ Both papers further noted that the London Stock Exchange had been closed on Friday, 31 July, an "unexampled" event (London time, ten hours behind Sydney time). The *Daily Telegraph* stated that insurers were already recalculating the premia on all maritime cargoes and vessels, locally and/or internationally owned, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated that if Britain joined the war, Australia's Navy would, for command purposes, be transferred to the Admiralty. Thus, at least in the Australian press, the political tensions of Europe were being reported as exceptional, and profoundly dangerous. When the RMS *Orsova* set sail from Sydney at noon, 1 August 1914, the families and friends who waved farewell to their loved ones probably experienced an uncomfortable mélange of pride and worry.

Further adding to the tumult of the times, Australia was technically without a federal Parliament, following its first ever double dissolution. Given that Childe and HV Evatt had already demonstrated a strong interest in social justice and the exercise of political power, the minutiae of this then-unique Constitutional event were likely to have been riveting for both them, as well as their friend, Henry. Evatt would go on to write his Doctor of Laws dissertation, *Certain Aspects of the Royal Prerogative: A Study in Constitutional Law* (1924) on the Constitutional powers of the monarch and their Australian representative, the Governor-General.¹¹ It was published in 1936 as, *The King and His Dominion Governors: A Study of the Reserve Power*.

⁹ *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW)*, 1 August 1914, 13.

¹⁰ "Code Messages Passing," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1914, 21.

¹¹ Michael Kirby, "Herbert Vere Evatt, the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after 60 years," *University of Western Australia Law Review* 34, no. 2 (2009): 244.

The 84th meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS)

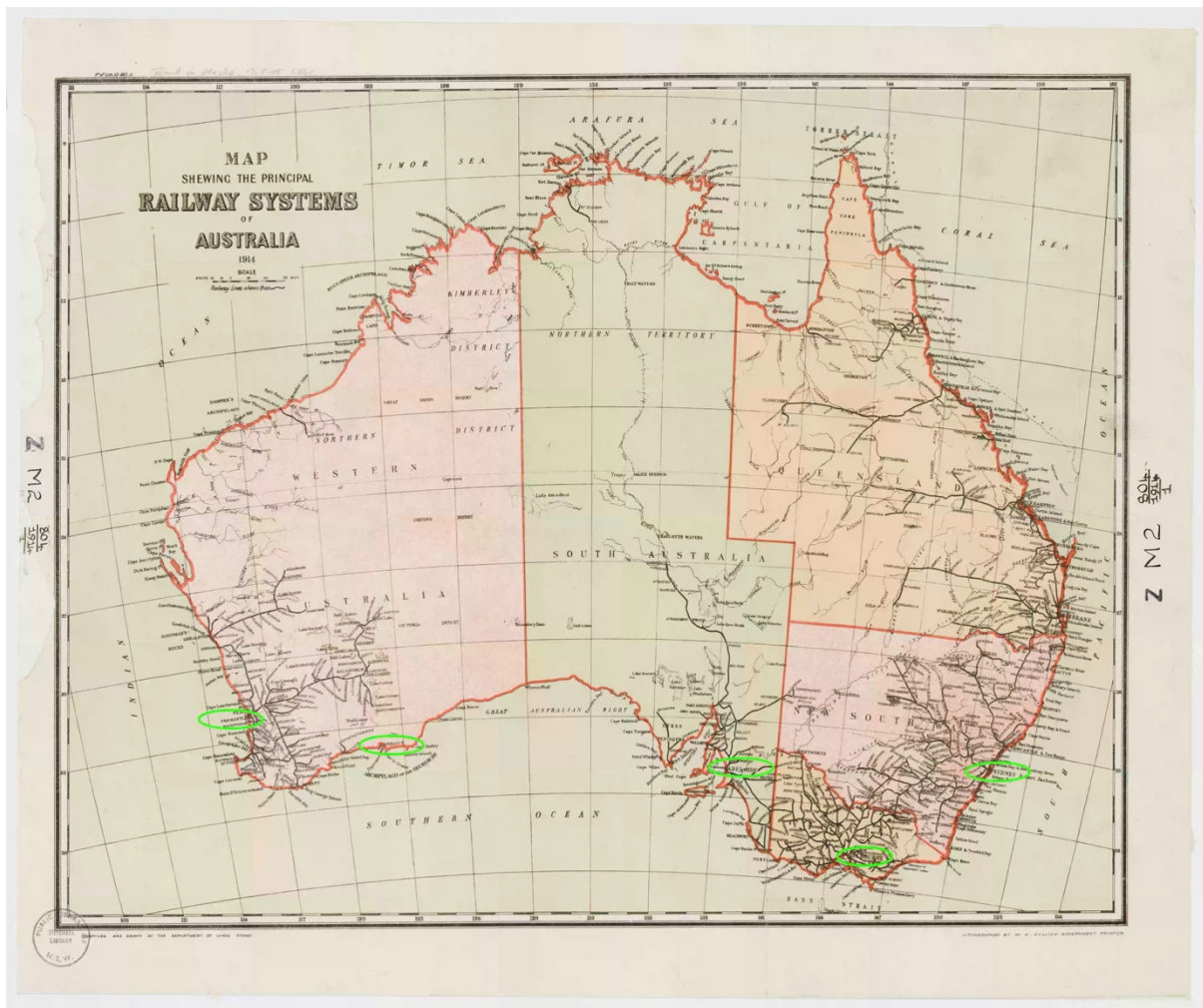


Figure 5.1: The vastness of Australian continent, 1914.

<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VvRjgZ5yEb/g7r5mXAepqePk#viewer>

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Australian continent, the Advance Party of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) was commencing its initial meetings and presentations in Western Australia, before continuing on to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. BAAS had sought confirmations from its members in October 1913, stating whether or not they would be attending the 1914 event. Since the Annual Meeting would also deal with the Association's normal business, its twenty five Council members were expected to participate. They included Professor John Linton (JL) Myres, who would

become Childe's BLitt supervisor the following year, after Childe changed his Oxford enrolment.¹²

Attendees would have had to allocate appropriate time in their schedules. For most, the journey to Australia would take approximately six weeks; the BAAS program ran for approximately four weeks, with a few individual variations; the return journey would also be expected to take around five to six weeks meaning that for most, they could expect to arrive home around early October, 1914.¹³ Although Childe probably could not have guessed how influential Professor Myres would become throughout his life, he likely knew that Myres, also editor of the influential anthropological journal, *Man*, would be in Australia at this time. Childe's mentor, Professor Woodhouse, who had been a colleague of Myres in Greece during the 1890s, may have maintained correspondence with him. Also, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 23 July 1914 had included Myres' name in the published attendee list for the BAAS events.¹⁴

The Australian participation in BAAS planning had gained momentum from early 1912. Each state had a committee drawn from its university professors, who were charged with organising venues, facilities and presentations at their institution. These university committees also liaised with the state's General Committee, which comprised of key figures from the broader community such as the state governor and elected premier. A Federal Executive was based in Melbourne, then the location of Australia's Prime Minister's Department as Canberra did not yet exist. The Prime Minister of the day – Andrew Fisher from 29 April 1910 to 24 June 1913 – had agreed to underwrite the expenses of these bodies.¹⁵ In the latter months of 1913, the Federal Executive's nominee, Dr AC Rivett travelled from Melbourne to Britain to work with the London BAAS office for six months.¹⁶

¹² Andrew Sherratt, "V. Gordon Childe: archaeology and intellectual history" *Past & Present* 125 (1989), 155.

¹³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1914, 13.

¹⁵ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 681-682. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

He returned to Melbourne in early 1914, and was provided with office space in the Prime Minister's Department in Melbourne to coordinate the final arrangements.¹⁷

Within BAAS, there were twelve disciplinary subsections; each of these would have their own meetings, events and information exchange organised mostly at relevant University facilities, in each of the main cities that were hosting the 84th Meeting. These bodies were referred to as Section A through Section M, and each dealt with one of the physical or social science disciplines. Professor Myres was mostly documented with Section H – Anthropology – events, although that particular year, he was not a Section H office holder.¹⁸ The existence and focus of Section J seems to have been variable; it did not, apparently, exist in 1914, however, by 1921 it was specifically allocated to Psychology, which had previously been a component of Section I – Physiology.¹⁹

Eventually, for the purposes of hospitality and the internal train travel arrangements, the Overseas Party numbered around 300.²⁰ This included an Advance Party that disembarked earlier in Fremantle, Western Australia from P&O's RMS *Malwa*, and who then participated in meetings, research and public presentations in Perth. On the evening of 29 July, eight of the international Advance Party were scheduled to receive honorary doctorates from the University of Western Australia, however, several of those professors – specifically Herdman, a biologist specialising in plankton, Bateson, the 1913/14 BAAS President and an eminent biologist specialising in heredity, and Walther, a German-born, Jena-trained geologist specialising in stratigraphy – were unable to attend so their honours were conferred *in absentia*.²¹ The reason for their absence is unclear. A substantial number of the remaining Overseas Party were travelling on Orient's RMS *Orvieto* which had left Britain on 3 July sailing via the Suez. RMS *Orvieto* was scheduled to dock in Fremantle on 4 August,

¹⁷ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 686. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁸ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, xlvii. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁹ Osbert John Radcliffe Howarth, *The British Association for the Advancement of Science: A Retrospect 1831-1921*. (The Association, 1922), 85.

²⁰ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 685, iv.

²¹ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 693.

to pick up the Advance Party before sailing across the Australian Bight to Adelaide, for the formal commencement of the BAAS program on 8 August.²²

Although some scholars have mentioned that the Australian-born Childe travelled to Britain from Sydney around the time that the Great War commenced, it has been viewed as a chronological coincidence that had little bearing on his future career choices. Sources now available, however, suggest a more complex, yet indistinct, kaleidoscope of synchronous events that warrants inquiry. Further, it seems unlikely that Childe and Henry would have been oblivious to the various extraordinary excitements that RMS *Orsova* would experience on this particular journey to Britain. We cannot, however, be certain of what they might have personally *witnessed*.

Monday, 3 August 1914 – Sunday, Greenwich time

RMS *Orsova* docked in Melbourne early on the morning of Monday, 3 August, 1914 and was scheduled to depart for Adelaide around early afternoon on Wednesday, 5 August. Childe and Henry were probably eager to see the morning editions of the newspapers, the main ones in Melbourne being *The Age* and the *Argus*. At that point in time, the front page of a newspaper was mostly dedicated to the essentials of a colonial province – mail and freight transport arrivals and departures between it and the rest of the world – mostly other ports across the British Empire/ Commonwealth, some Births, Deaths and Marriages, and, depending upon its editorial traditions, sometimes a very brief summary of ‘news’ that would be described more thoroughly in its news section, that appeared – usually – in the second half of the issue.²³ While both of Sydney’s main dailies had adopted the practice of a page one news summary – the *Sydney Morning Herald* in column one and the *Daily Telegraph* in column eight – this was less common in Melbourne. On Monday, 3 August, Melbourne’s *Argus* had a small, upper case note in the top left corner, “GREAT WAR IN EUROPE”, while *The Age* preferred not to yield any of its page one advertising space although it included extensive coverage, from pages eight to eleven, in its ‘news section’,

²² Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 689-694.

²³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

examining both the war preparations in Europe and the forthcoming Australian federal election.

Assuming that the Oxford-bound students knew only what was public knowledge, that is, what was published in the newspapers, they would probably have considered Melbourne's Monday morning newspapers to have complementary, yet differing, coverage of the tense international events, their impacts upon this distant dominion, and their effects upon the futures of these scholarship recipients. Both papers reported that Germany, a Triple Alliance member, had, indeed, declared war upon Russia, a country that had, at that time, a mutual defence treaty with Britain and France (the Triple Entente). Both papers anticipated extensive military and naval mobilisation, and reported that Sydney's port traffic was already subject to a night-time curfew and new inspection rules – measures that would have emotionally resonated with these young men who had only just left their home, friends and family there. Notably, even though Britain had not declared itself to be at war, suggesting that its own measures were purely defensive, expectations across the Australian community were that a wider war was inevitable. Both papers also reported the weekend assassination of an elected French antimilitarist parliamentarian, M. Jaurés, a member of France's Socialist Party.

Both newspapers noted that the intensifying international conflicts had disrupted Australia's federal election campaigning, and that most senior members of government would arrive in Melbourne later that day for emergency meetings involving the Prime Minister, along with naval and military chiefs. Further, both noted that both the incumbent Prime Minister, Mr Cook, and his adversary, Mr Fisher, voiced their support for Britain, while commentators suggested that the September election be postponed. When questioned about the problem of Australia being without a Parliament, Mr Cook asserted that it still had a Government.²⁴

In spite of the similarities, the tone of the newspapers' coverage differed. As well as a reasonably objective summary of the positions of each of the European nations, *The Argus*, a relatively 'progressive' newspaper, reported that, in London, there was some professorial opposition to Britain succumbing to 'Jingoism' and militarism.²⁵ *The Age's* news section had

²⁴ "Mr. Cook Reticent," *The Argus*, 3 August 1914, 16.

²⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

much larger headlines including “GREATEST WAR IN WORLD’S HISTORY”. While both papers reported that Canada, another self-governing dominion of the British Commonwealth, had already offered to send 30,000 troops, this was positioned far more prominently in *The Age*, generally a more conservative newspaper. Curiously, *The Argus* reported that PM Cook “invariably” travelled with the appropriate “code key” for confidential messages of State but went on to note that he both did, and did not have, decrypting issues when in regional Victoria the day before.²⁶ Equally curiously, *The Age* reported that as at 10pm Sunday night, “neither the Governor-General nor the Prime Minister had been officially informed that Germany had declared war on Russia”²⁷, adding that reports in other newspapers “apparently do not embrace this all-important fact”.

While *The Argus* provided more coverage to the unprecedented Stock Exchange closures in various international cities, *The Age* reported that British newspapers had declared that it would be disloyal to publish information about British troop and naval movements.²⁸ *The Argus* stated that since the Welsh coal miners did not support the war footing, the British Government had taken control of Welsh coal ports. *The Age* stated that German ships usually stationed in her China “protectorates”, had been ordered to Samoa in the South Pacific (to the east of Australia), describing this as “remarkable” and “peculiar”.²⁹ The vessel movements were then interpreted as evidence that Germany had been planning to initiate a war for over a month.

The Age also provided a very thorough listing of all German-owned vessels currently in or near Australian waters, and their scheduled movements over coming weeks.³⁰ Given later events, this was probably a useful resource. Most of the freighting contracts between Australia and northern Europe were handled by two companies with German-flagged ships – the Norddeutscher-Lloyd line, also known as NDL, and the German-Australian line. According to *The Age’s* list, NDL had five vessels in Australian ports at that time and around

²⁶ “Mr. Cook returns to Melbourne,” *The Argus*, 3 August 1914, 16.

²⁷ “Absence of Official News,” *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 11.

²⁸ “No Publicity,” *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 9.

²⁹ “Germany in the South Pacific,” *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 11.

³⁰ “German Shipping,” *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 11.

seven scheduled to arrive over the coming weeks, while the German-Australian line had nine vessels in Australian ports and perhaps twelve due in coming weeks. All of these vessels – and virtually anything on board – could potentially be impounded while in Australian waters. Once Germany had declared war upon Russia and it seemed increasingly likely that Britain would declare war on Germany, the German-flagged vessels were reported as departing Australian waters if possible. On the facing page of this issue, *The Age* provided a succinct, nuanced summary of the legal risks pertaining to seized British, neutral and German-flagged merchant vessels and their cargoes.³¹ Over the coming days – and sometimes intersecting with the *Orsova's* itinerary – a number of German-flagged vessels would either be seized in Australian waters, or would attempt to avoid capture.

The Argus also reported the imminent return to Melbourne from Britain of Australia's newly appointed Chief of General Staff, Colonel JG Legge.³² Col Legge had just completed a two year posting to London, attached to Lord Kitchener's office from 1912 to early 1914. Assessments of his influence vary and require critical review. Legge and Kitchener had originally met during Kitchener's visit to Australia in late 1909; Legge was designing the Universal Training Scheme and apparently Kitchener was impressed by the Scheme, later adopting some of its features (Clark 1986).³³ Col. Legge had graduated from the University of Sydney in Law (BA, MA, LLB) in the 1880s, however, it is unknown whether his name and role would have been familiar to Childe and Henry. If they had been aware of his (temporary) involvement with the 1907 establishment of the University's department of Military Science or his later professional activities, the report may have had meaning for them.³⁴ *The Age* did not mention Col Legge's return to Australia until Wednesday 5 August; by chance, he was travelling on the same vessel as many of the BAAS delegates, RMS *Orvieto*.³⁵

³¹ "Capture at Sea," *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 10.

³² "Imperial Despatches," *The Argus*, 3 August 1914, 16. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³³ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁴ "Military," *Hermes* 1907, Vol 13, No 2, 42.

³⁵ "Chief of General Staff Arrives," *The Age*, 5 August 1914, 11.

It is also unknown if Childe or Henry had visited Melbourne previously, or if this was a first experience for one or both of them. Nevertheless, it seems likely that both would have been eager and able to tour its near-ish sights during Monday afternoon and evening. If they were allowed to leave the ship, they were likely aware of the tension and suspense crackling through the streets as people gathered, trying to discern between ‘fact’ and rumour.

Tuesday, 4 August 1914 – Monday, Greenwich time

The schedules of mail steamers, like RMS *Orsova*, tended to be published months in advance; on this journey, the vessel was due to depart Melbourne on Wednesday, 5 August. *The Age*, however, stated in its 4 August issue, that the *Orsova* would depart later that Tuesday afternoon and, depending upon events, might have to return to Britain via the Cape of Good Hope on South Africa’s western southerly coast, rather than the original Suez route.³⁶ The same article also noted that all steamer passengers were no longer permitted to disembark at the European ports. Most other major Australian papers seem, however, to confirm that *Orsova* did, in fact, maintain its original schedule, although Melbourne’s *Argus* noted that 160 bales of wool that were supposed to be loaded on to the *Orsova* on Monday were, instead, returned to the wool stores, following a cancellation of an order.³⁷ These details add to an overall sense of haphazard uncertainty that week, yet it is hard to know how much of this would have been visible or apparent to Childe and Henry. At the least, they would have had access to the Melbourne newspapers of Tuesday, 4 August, and perhaps also Wednesday, 5 August. Australia’s unique federal election was virtually eclipsed by the escalating drama of international conflict and its potential consequences for this dominion on the other side of the world.

Although Britain – and by extension, Australia – had still not officially joined the war, the overall tone of most reporting was that participation was both inevitable and honourable. Tuesday’s reporting included the German perspective that it had declared war on Russia in response to Russia’s troop mobilisation on its borders but this was quickly drowned by the

³⁶ “The Mail Steamers,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 10.

³⁷ “Wool by Orsova Returned,” *The Argus*, 4 August 1914, 10.

volume of sheer excitement around the ‘adventure’ of defending Britain.³⁸ The expectation was that war was imminent and that preparations were proceeding as planned; censorship, for example, was already being established in Britain and would be introduced in Australia.³⁹ *The Age* noted that the senior officers on the vessels of Britain’s main mail steamer companies – Orient and P&O – were Royal Navy Reserve (RNR), implying trust and reassurance in their training and expertise.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, some messaging was confusing. It was reported that Australia’s Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, and Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, had agreed that the country would provide an initial expeditionary force of 20,000 men.⁴¹ Yet, on the following page, an almost inconspicuous story from Britain’s *Chronicle* asserted that the British government would “not send expeditionary forces abroad”.⁴² Perhaps surprisingly, *The Age* also published an editorial that day, supporting Australia’s military contribution but arguing that it was unwise to agree to relinquishing command of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to Britain’s Admiralty, as Australia was geographically isolated and therefore needed to keep its warships.⁴³

Given Australia’s prominence as a trading nation that was dependent upon shipping, there was considerable concern around the impacts of conflict on vessels and their cargoes. Shipping was required both to transport its crops and minerals to the rest of the world and to import tertiary products and expertise. Further, Germany had become a major trading partner; in 1913, it provided almost 9% of Australia’s imports but purchased considerably more Australian exports.⁴⁴ Thus, the newspapers also published articles daily, exploring the various maritime aspects of the evolving situation. Within Australian waters, this included concerns related to the legal considerations around capturing German-flagged ships and any

³⁸ “The Australian Offer,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 9.

³⁹ “Censorship Established,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 9.

⁴⁰ “The Mail Steamers,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 10.

⁴¹ “Australia and the War,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 8.

⁴² “England will not send troops abroad,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 9.

⁴³ *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 8 (col 4).

⁴⁴ “German Imports and Exports,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 10.

contents that could be construed as “contraband”. Essentially, contraband – “absolute” or “conditional” – applied to anything that could be used for the activities of war.

The contractual uncertainties triggered immediate economic convulsions. Lay offs, soon numbering in the thousands, commenced at the mines in Broken Hill because metals and ores could no longer be reliably transported overseas, leading to the cancellation of supply contracts.⁴⁵ German-flagged vessels at risk of seizure abruptly altered their schedules. On Tuesday, *The Age* reported that NDL’s wireless-equipped *Seydlitz*, which had arrived in Sydney on 25 July and was scheduled to be there until 5 August, had unexpectedly departed on 3 August triggering speculations that, instead of its usual stops in Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle, it would attempt to bypass them on its return journey west to Bremen, Germany.⁴⁶

Wednesday, 5 August 1914 – Tuesday, Greenwich time

By Wednesday, the coverage was slightly muted, possibly because there seems to have been complete cable silence between Britain and Melbourne on Tuesday, 4 August from 7.15am Melbourne time until late afternoon, triggering speculation that the underwater cables required for this communication technology had been severed. In Wednesday’s *Age*, the Melbourne manager of the company responsible for the ocean cables between Britain and Australia asserted first, that the company’s control centre could rapidly identify a broken cable and its location, and second, that there were four independent cable paths from Britain to Australia, ensuring that total cable destruction was almost impossible. He was therefore confident that the silence had been caused by Britain’s censors, as they established their technical infrastructure.⁴⁷ New regulations were also introduced, banning cables in code, or any language other than English or French.⁴⁸

Meanwhile in Port Melbourne, NDL’s *Pfalz*, had arrived on 31 July and was originally due to sail to Sydney later on Tuesday, 4 August. Due to the deteriorating geopolitical situation, it

⁴⁵ “Serious Position at Broken Hill,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 11.

⁴⁶ “German Steamer’s Movements,” *The Age*, 4 August 1914, 11.

⁴⁷ “The European Cable,” *The Age*, 5 August 1914, 9.

⁴⁸ “Government censors all cable messages,” *The Age*, 5 August 1914, 8.

postponed its departure, so that it could load more coal. It finally departed from Port Melbourne on the Wednesday morning leading to an incident around the middle of the day near the heads of Port Phillip Bay.⁴⁹ This involved a shot across the bow, consultation, and a resolution; the contemporaneous newspaper reports are contradictory. It is unclear if any part of the kerfuffle was visible or audible from *Orsova's* Port Melbourne berth or to passengers such as Childe and Henry.⁵⁰

Most newspaper accounts concur that *Orsova did* depart Melbourne at around 3.30pm in the afternoon of Wednesday, 5 August, rather than the Tuesday; thus, it seems likely that Childe and Henry would have been able to view Wednesday morning's papers. *The Age* also reported that RMS *Orviato* had arrived, as expected, in Fremantle on Tuesday, 4 August, to pick up the BAAS Advance Party before departing later that day for Adelaide, where the 84th BAAS Meeting would officially commence on Saturday, 8 August.⁵¹ This leg of the journey – across the Great Australian Bight – would normally take around three and a half days. Sir Oliver Lodge, BAAS's then President and an eminent physicist, had been interviewed in Fremantle on board RMS *Orviato*, about the prospects of a European war. He was reported as being aghast that Britain might be “dragged into” the conflict, stating, “This war will throw civilisation right back.”⁵²

Thursday, 6 August 1914 – Wednesday, Greenwich time

The journey by sea from Melbourne to Adelaide might normally take around 36 hours, depending upon weather and tugboat availability for harbour and dock ingress and egress. During this leg of the passage, RMS *Orsova* would not have had access to daily newspapers, however, its passengers and crew were probably *not* completely disconnected from news of the dramatic, unfolding events. As a prestigious vessel, RMS *Orsova* had the latest communications technology installed – wireless telegraphy (W/T), which enabled messages to be transmitted and received via wireless connections, rather than physical cables.

⁴⁹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵¹ “British Scientists,” *The Age*, 5 August 1914, 11.

⁵² “Science and the War,” *The Age*, 5 August 1914, 10.

Friday, 7 August 1914

RMS *Orsova* docked in Adelaide around 7am on the morning of Friday, 7 August, where it was scheduled to pick up mail and several additional passengers embarking there, before departing at 1pm that same day, for Fremantle. Given the brief stay in port, it seems unlikely that *Orsova's* passengers were able to leave the vessel although they would reasonably expect Friday's Adelaide newspapers to be delivered to them, and maybe the Thursday papers too. Again, we cannot be certain of what Childe and Henry were able to witness personally from the ship's decks, but apparently cargo comprising ten tons of tin, previously loaded on to the *Orsova* in the eastern states, was hastily unloaded in Adelaide that morning, as it was no longer considered a suitable export in a time of war.⁵³

Friday's *Advertiser* led its coverage with a startlingly detailed list of the defence resources of each of the combatant nations; the focus was upon their naval strengths, including the names, tonnage and dimensions of all of their active ships, as well as summaries of their military forces. The news pages included yet more articles around the legal rights and expectations of merchant ship and cargo seizures, including an extended statement from the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, on that subject. There was also a notification that all future NDL sailings from Australian ports were cancelled, advice that RMS *Orsova's* mail should be delivered to London on 6 September, and an acknowledgement that Adelaide was currently experiencing a 24 hour delay on receiving cables from Europe. This was attributed to censorship blockages. Although the imminent arrival of RMS *Orviato*, bearing so many of the world's distinguished scientists was exciting, the more extensive BAAS coverage would appear the following day.

Readers also learnt that NDL's *Greifswald* had been seized in Fremantle the day before, as the distressed captain, sailing from South Africa, had docked in an Australian port, not realising that Britain had declared war on Germany. The vessel's cargo included chemicals, which were now considered contraband. Other alarming accounts told of German "spies" being arrested from suburban homes in London and Paris.⁵⁴ Unexpectedly, a later source – the digitised BAAS travel diary of Oxford curator, Henry Balfour – records that RMS *Orviato*

⁵³ "Orsova's Cargo," *Register*, 8 August 1914, 13.

⁵⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

and RMS *Orsova* passed each other on the sea at around 11.15pm on the evening of Friday, 7 August. He implies that the passengers on *Orvioto* were heartened that *Orsova* had left Adelaide safely.⁵⁵ It is unclear as to why this might be so.

Saturday, 8 August 1914 to Tuesday, 11 August 1914

The remainder of RMS *Orsova*'s three and a half day journey across the Bight had further moments of eventfulness. It was later reported by the *West Australian* on Wednesday, 12 August 1914, that on the previous Sunday, 9 August, *Orsova*'s officers, while transiting the Bight, had searched the cabins of two (second class) German passengers after being alerted by "Commonwealth authorities". According to the report, they found a "large quantity of ammunition" and a "loaded revolver". Given the closed environment of a ship at sea, it is likely that, at the very least, subsequent shipboard gossip would have alerted Childe and Henry to the excitement. When RMS *Orsova* docked in Fremantle early the following Tuesday morning, 11 August – as scheduled – the two Germans were arrested and escorted from the vessel.⁵⁶ Thereafter, the report continued, *Orsova* took on a 'large load of coal' and departed in the afternoon. It did not specify whether the vessel intended to maintain its original itinerary via Colombo and the Suez Canal, or the alternate possibility via the Cape of Good Hope.

Strategic ambiguities

Excepting a few ambiguous and potentially contradictory accounts of the events of those first weeks of August, 1914, thus far the general outline of the voyage seems relatively clear. However, once other information sources are included, it becomes more difficult to reconcile conflicting versions. Contemporaneous sources such as newspapers – eagerly read by many of the public – demonstrated a strong, ongoing interest in the varied consequences for merchant shipping of the rapidly escalating conflict. This was hardly surprising given the island continent's economic dependence upon maritime activities.⁵⁷ Interestingly, the focus seems to have been more on the whereabouts and schedules of

⁵⁵ <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/australia-1914-baas-british-association-advancement-science-meeting-sydney-etc> viewed 27 January 2022. Note: *Orsova* has scanned as *Orsovo*.

⁵⁶ "Further arrests at Fremantle," *West Australian*, 12 August 1914, 8.

⁵⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

‘enemy’ shipping in Australian waters, rather than on the various risks facing ‘non-enemy’ vessels outside of Australian waters although logically, the dangers would have been similar. There were obvious overt concerns – by depriving ‘the enemy’ of its assets (including people), the seized merchant ships would no longer be available to supply the enemy navy nor could they be requisitioned to be repurposed as troop carriers or hospital ships.⁵⁸ However, there were also important *covert* elements, mostly related to the complementary components of communications networks. These have since been scrutinised in greater detail by scholars from various disciplines, although the analyses remain less well-known to the general public.

Communications resources

From a naval strategy perspective, the critical components of the communications network at that point in time were the network of underwater telegraphic cables, along with land-based telegraphic stations. Conventional international telegraphy had relied upon land-based stations, connected by either terrestrial or undersea cables. The cable infrastructure was (and is) expensive and was mostly owned and controlled either by Imperial governments or closely related companies.⁵⁹ One of the late nineteenth century technological advances was the development of wireless telegraphy (W/T), which allowed messages to be transmitted via wireless connections, rather than physical cables. By the early twentieth century, this innovative technology was being installed, not only on navy vessels, but also luxury steamships like RMS *Orsova*. Prior to the invention of W/T, ships had had to rely upon ‘line of sight’ communications while at sea and were usually unaware of changing political circumstances until they docked at a port. The disadvantage of wireless communications, however, was that their messages were easier to intercept than cabled ones, plus the ‘eavesdropping’ – interception – was ‘invisible’. The invention of W/T technology was to trigger new naval strategies, defensive and offensive, around communications.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 26.

⁵⁹ Patrick Beesly, *Room 40: British naval intelligence, 1914-18* (Hamish Hamilton, 1982), 2. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁰ Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 14-15.

While these early twentieth century technologies for international communications and supply lines might seem like quaint details now, the key points had been an ongoing part of the general Australian conversation since Federation. They were familiar to intelligent, literate citizens and they shaped the discussions and decisions that had led to the formation of Australia's Navy, its choice of vessel types, and its personnel training. Further, in a time of national crisis, the Australian newspapers were the primary tool for communicating information to the public. This included changes and restrictions upon enemy-owned vessels, foreign-language communications and the telegraphic stations. The publishers and the government authorities expected this subject matter to be sufficiently familiar in the public discourse, to be meaningful to readers.

Cryptography

A final, more discreet, component was cryptography – codes. The two sides of cryptography are interception and decryption. Within a few hours of officially declaring war, Britain implemented an interception plan originally devised in 1912 – it cut the European underwater cables that were owned by Germany. This was a strategic act, intended to drive German communications to the more interceptable W/T technology. In the Pacific and Indian Oceans adjacent to Australian coasts, the German Empire was already more reliant on W/T for communications with their colonies because they had elected not to install the more expensive system of underwater cables.⁶¹

With regard to decryption, the German navy was known to have three major codebooks in place across the world.⁶² One was primarily for communications between merchant ships that were supplying German naval vessels, and two others were expected to be used *between* German naval vessels and diplomatic sites during a time of war. Thus, when plans were published to seize German-flagged vessels at Australian ports as per the previously negotiated international treaties, the *covert* hope was that the codebooks for supply-line communications between merchant ships and the navy ships would also be located and seized. This would mean that as long as the German navy did not replace the entire codebook, intercepted messages to and from (uncaptured) supply-line vessels were more

⁶¹ Beesly, *Room 40*, 2; Strazcek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 15-16, 18-21.

⁶² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

vulnerable to being decoded, therefore revealing the positions, strengths and weaknesses of enemy war vessels. Being able to deduce the location of enemy vessels was extremely important in an era when satellite tracking was not an option.

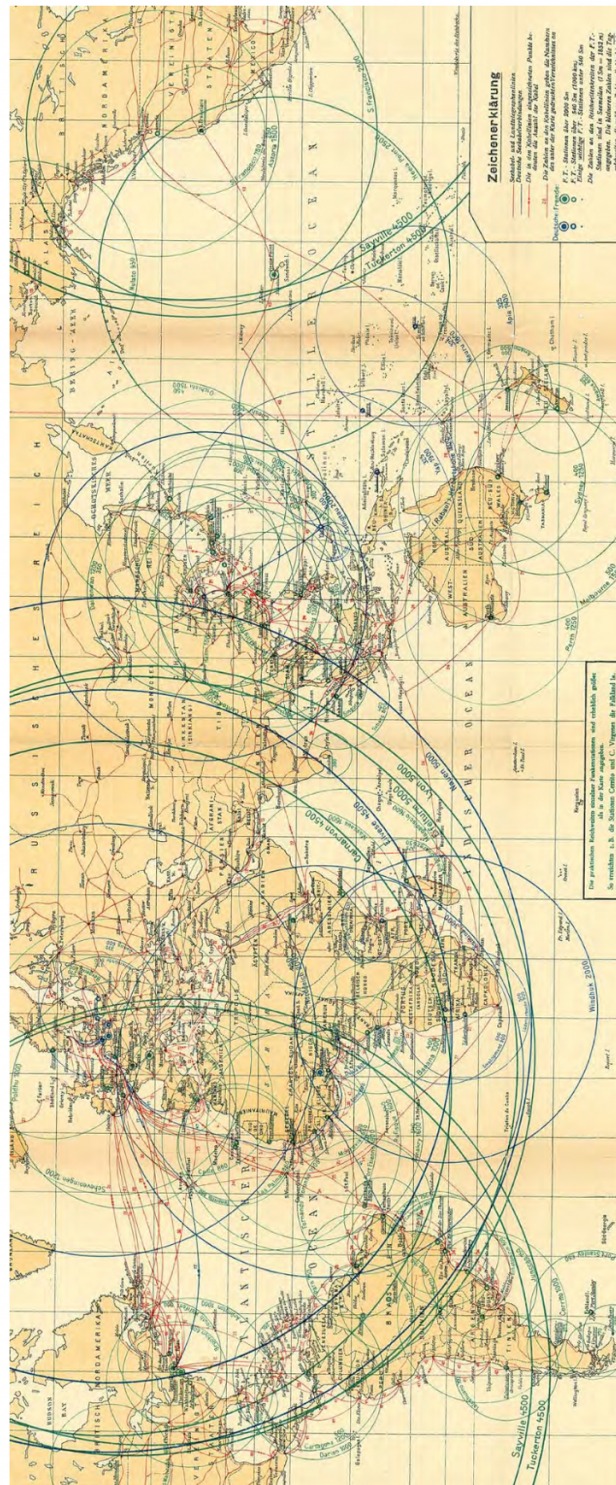


Figure 5.2: International wireless networks in 1914. After Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 21a.

The codebook for the merchant ships was the *Handelsverkehrsbuch* (HVB), while the codebooks for communications between German navy vessels were the *Signalbuch der Kaiserlichen Marine* (SKM) – the “most secret”, according to Beesly, but also probably the least successful and most dated – and the *Verkehrsbuch* (VB), used also by the embassies.⁶³ Even when a codebook was available, however, an intercepted message would usually still require considerable decoding effort because it would utilise a ‘key’, or cipher, shared between sender and recipient. The codebook itself was intentionally massive, dense and obscure; the message’s ‘key’ would indicate the relevant code location(s) within the codebook but this was often not available for intercepted messages and therefore decoding expertise and effort was required to tease out the ‘meaning’ of the key.

While there is no evidence directly linking the Australian graduate students aboard RMS *Orsova* with the later, better-documented cryptographic activities of the war, both Childe and Henry had the academic background that was preferred at that time for such work and consequently, they may have been regarded as ‘future talent’. Although codebreaking later became more strongly associated with the mathematics disciplines, earlier cryptographers tended to come from a Classics background, with an emphasis on philology.⁶⁴ Several aspects of their training were especially relevant. First, university examinations often required them to translate unfamiliar – and incomplete – texts, requiring them to supplement their knowledge of a particular vocabulary and grammar with their understanding of its broader cultural context, so as to make informed guesses in the translation. Second, it was perceived as an advantage, that they had trained to understand languages which expressed ideas and concepts differently from modern European languages. Third, a good working knowledge of modern European languages was helpful, since the various ciphers were likely to be based upon a non-English language, such as German. Classics scholars were likely to be familiar with the discipline’s German and French-language journals. Finally, given that code-breaking involved handling classified information, trust and confidentiality was important. Thus, recruitment gave preference to

⁶³ Beesly, *Room 40*, 22, 25-27; Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 27-28.

⁶⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

the 'old boys network', further reinforcing the selection of Classics scholars.⁶⁵ That said, in his 1982 account of Room 40's inception and activities during 1914-1918, Beesly asserts that in the early 20th century, only the Austro-Hungarian Empire had prioritised code-breaking skills as an important part of their Intelligence infrastructure. Thereafter, the French commenced a program – Cabinet Noir – in 1912.⁶⁶ It would be interesting to review the sources available now, to reassess the validity of this claim.

Codebooks captured in Australian waters

In 1928-ish, it became public information, albeit still a relatively unknown story, that in 1914, soon after the declaration of war on Germany, Australia was able to supply Britain with a copy of the HVB, thus significantly aiding Britain's capacity to decipher intercepted messages. Since the initial publication in Jose's Volume IX of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, however, the details of the capture of the HVB and its journey to London have tended to shapeshift over the decades, as other documentation has been declassified, and sometimes digitised. The best known version of events, arising from the 1928 Jose account, is that the German Australian Line's *SS Hobart* entered Port Melbourne early on 12 August 1914, because it was unaware that war had been declared, thus making the vessel vulnerable to seizure.⁶⁷ Subsequently, the German-flagged ship was boarded, and its HVB seized. The story continues that several days earlier, on 9 August the *SS Hobart* had used its on-board W/T to advise Esperance,⁶⁸ a W/T station on the southern coastline of the Great Australian Bight, roughly due south of Kalgoorlie, of its position as it headed towards Melbourne, after crossing the Indian Ocean. 'Recognising this as a unique opportunity to capture the codes', a naval operation was 'immediately launched', whereby *the W/T stations from Western Australia to Melbourne* jammed the wireless signals until it arrived in Melbourne, so that the vessel would not be 'tipped off' while crossing the Bight.

⁶⁵ Annie Burman, "Classics at Bletchley," in *Codebreakers and Groundbreakers*, edited by Ioannis Galanakis, Anastasia Christophilopoulou, and James Grime. (Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017), 60-66.

⁶⁶ Beesly, *Room 40*, 3. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶⁷ Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 28-29.

⁶⁸ John Fahey, *Australia's first spies: the remarkable story of Australia's intelligence operations, 1901-1945* (Allen & Unwin, 2018), 46-47.

Although researchers have been puzzled that German-flagged *SS Hobart* remained unaware, in spite of its W/T capabilities, about the declaration of war several days earlier on 5 August, Australian time, until its 9 August transmission to the Esperance station, no answer is forthcoming.⁶⁹ Further, although the W/T-enabled RMS *Orsova* happened to be travelling across the Great Australian Bight towards the Indian Ocean from 8 August to 10 August, while the *SS Hobart* was travelling the opposite way in the same period, there is *no known evidence* to suggest that either vessel had any awareness of the proximity of the other, excepting that on Monday, 3 August Melbourne's *The Age* had published that the German-flagged *SS Hobart* was due in Melbourne on 12 August, after sailing from Algoa Bay, South Africa.⁷⁰ There is also currently no known connection between the reported 9 August excitement on *Orsova* with the reported 9 August wireless transmission of *Hobart*. Fortunately, the reported wireless jamming operation from 9 August to 12 August does not appear to have had any adverse impact on anything else going on between Esperance and Melbourne.⁷¹

Seized codebooks have no value if they are not used. As has been repeated over the years, the HVB captured in Melbourne from the *SS Hobart* was eventually copied by a team of typists, proof-read, and printed; copies were then sent via steamer to London's Admiralty and eventually their newly-established 'Room 40', the forerunner of World War II's Bletchley Park decoding facility.⁷² They reportedly arrived there around late October, 1914.⁷³ Between its initial capture on 12 August, and despatch towards the end of September 1914, a team – subject to Australia's *Crimes Act*, akin to Britain's *Official Secrets Act* – based in Melbourne's Naval Offices and led by Capt J Wheatley, used it to decipher

⁶⁹ Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 28.

⁷⁰ "Expected at Australian Ports," *The Age*, 3 August 1914, 11.

⁷¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷³ Beesly, *Room 40*, 4.

German W/T messages, either intercepted ‘locally’ or forwarded from the embryonic Room 40 cryptography team, who (apparently) had not yet received an HVB copy.⁷⁴

More recent research has revealed, however, that contrary to earlier accounts, *SS Hobart’s* copy of the HVB was not the only one captured in Australian waters at the outbreak of war. In research for his 2008 PhD dissertation, Straczek located archived communications between Fremantle’s District Naval Officer (DNO) and Melbourne’s coordinating Naval Office, which was also in direct communication with the Admiralty in London. The DNO requested instructions on how to deal with a codebook, later identified as another copy of the HVB, seized from *SS Griefswald* [sic] on Monday, 10 August.⁷⁵ In a reply characterised by Straczek as “prompt and curious”, the DNO was told to retain the codebook in Fremantle rather than sending it to Melbourne, so that intercepted messages could be deciphered locally. Straczek interpreted the unexpected response to imply that Britain already had cryptography plans underway, even though the establishment of the London-based Room 40 was not supposed to have commenced until at least a week later. Given, however, that *Adelaide’s Advertiser* had reported several days *earlier*, on Friday, 7 August, that the *Griefswald* [sic] had been seized in Fremantle the day before, on 6 August – to its Captain’s great distress – the DNO’s report of the captured codebook on 10 August seems tardy. On the other hand, perhaps the Captain’s visible distress prompted further searching aboard the impounded ship and maybe it took several days to locate the codebook.⁷⁶

Straczek’s concerns appear to have since been vindicated by Fahey, a former intelligence officer with Australia’s Defence Signals Directorate, who, in 2018, published a history of Australia’s early intelligence operations. In an oddly worded description, he implies that by 10 August 1914 – two days prior to the 12 August capture in Melbourne of *SS Hobart’s* HVB – the DNOs of not only Fremantle, but also Brisbane and Sydney, had secured copies of the HVB from seized vessels.⁷⁷ More surprisingly, he goes on to say that by Thursday, 3

⁷⁴ Fahey, *Australia’s First Spies*, 50; Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 33-40. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁵ Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 26-27. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁶ The *Advertiser* also named the vessel as *Griefswald* [sic].

⁷⁷ Fahey, *Australia’s First Spies*, 46.

September, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) also possessed an SKM, the supposedly more secret, yet more abstruse, codebook intended for communications *between* German naval vessels (and perhaps their W/T stations in the Pacific colonies). To the best of my knowledge, the RAN acquisition of a locally-sourced copy of the SKM has not previously been mentioned by scholars; Room 40's acquisition of an SKM (Copy 151) has been attributed to an apparently questionable series of events in northern Europe, that included a delay of at least six weeks between the Russians acquiring the codebook in late August, and successfully passing it on to their British allies in mid October.⁷⁸ Curiously, Fahey does not specify precisely where – or exactly when – the RAN's copy of the SKM was acquired.⁷⁹ After leaving Fremantle, Western Australia, Childe and Henry sailed for nine exposed days across the Indian Ocean. The exact whereabouts and strength of the dangerous German Indo-Pacific fleet was a nerve-wracking mystery. Before W/T technology, RMS *Orsova* would have been deaf to any war news until reaching the next port, however, this was a new era for communications. And cryptography. Importantly, the many ambiguities, gaps in information, and previously unrecognised, unexpected coincidences of this unique journey would not be evident without applying a life-writing approach to the research question, 'given Childe's background and the scholarly expectations for his future, how did he respond and adapt to the Great War?'

⁷⁸ Beesly, *Room 40*, 4-6.

⁷⁹ Fahey, *Australia's First Spies*, 47. For another odd and unresolved thread, see Appendix 8 – Malinowski.

Chapter 6

The Great War, 1914 to 1917

We have established a richer and more nuanced understanding of Childe's background, explored the scholarly expectations for his future, and probed the logistical complications arising from the declaration of a war that had long been dreaded. We now need to examine Childe's three year period at Oxford, in order to better gauge how he might have adapted and responded to the Great War over time. As a life-writing question, this has required cross-referencing a multiplicity of diverse sources, ranging from contemporaneous institutional publications, newspapers and journals, later biographies and autobiographies, national war records, and secondary academic literature. Tools such as spreadsheets have made it easier to synthesise data from diverse sources, in order to reconstruct a meaningful timeline. For the purposes of this research question, a primarily chronological presentation of the data has yielded insights that were not otherwise apparent. In particular, the methodology draws attention to coincident events which may have added otherwise unsuspected emotional tones to decisions and choices. Many ambiguities remain; hopefully, further answers will emerge in future research.

Childe and Henry disembarked in Britain at Plymouth on 12 September 1914; it is unknown if they were met by anyone before they travelled on to Oxford.¹ Their access to news while aboard RMS *Orsova* was probably intermittent, gleaned during the infrequent port stops and perhaps supplemented by W/T updates via the captain. They would eventually have learnt that Australia's first double dissolution federal election, held 5 September 1914, had unexpectedly resulted in a landslide win for the Labor Party. Joseph Cook's 'Fusion Liberal' government was ousted and the self-described socialist, Andrew Fisher was returned to the Prime Ministership after just over twelve months in Opposition.² Britain's focus, however,

¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

² https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/election-dates.htm

was upon the war. Across the country, around 600,000 men volunteered for the defence forces in September alone and by the end of the year, 1.2 million had enlisted.³

Michaelmas 1914 – October to December

In the final months of 1914, Childe and Henry would have been adjusting to their new lives – remembering that in 1914, Oxford and Britain were equally cut adrift from familiar ways. Oxford’s undergraduate population, which usually numbered around 3,000, was shrinking fast; by the end of 1914, approximately half had already volunteered, enlisting at the nearby regional recruitment centre, Cowley Barracks.⁴ Notably, universities like Oxford had substantially higher rates of enlistment than the general population, with many students in residence joining the Officers Training Corps (OTC).⁵ Several observations are relevant, in regard to the attitudes of the broader British community to the war and volunteering, both for active service and in support roles. First, in the broader community, the enlistment rates were substantially less than 50% of eligible men.⁶ Second, while enlistment was theoretically ‘voluntary’, there was often enormous social pressure within kindred social cohorts to conform.⁷ Third, prominent intellectuals who had previously advocated political negotiations rapidly changed their minds in response to the German invasion of officially-neutral Belgium and, in particular, the burning of the library at the University of Louvain.⁸ It appears that a powerful sentiment in the first months, unlike later, was that the allied cause was “just”.⁹ Nevertheless, across Britain, there was also a mix of socio-political groups coalescing around anti-war principles in various guises. These factors would all contribute

³ Doron Lamm, “British soldiers of the First World War: creation of a representative sample,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* (1988): 58. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 166, 168.

⁵ Jay M. Winter, “Oxford and the First World War,” in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VIII: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Brian Harrison. (History of the University of Oxford, 1994), 8.

⁶ Adrian Gregory, *The last great war: British society and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 24-25, 89.

⁷ Gregory, *The last great war*, 77.

⁸ Gregory, *The last great war*, 37. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁹ Winter, “Oxford and the First World War”, 8. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

to major changes of sentiment from one season to the next, partly as a consequence of demographic distortions, caused by changing policy implementations.¹⁰

As planned, Childe entered Oxford's Queen's College while Henry joined New College. Probably virtually on arrival, Henry successfully enlisted, joining the 7th Battalion of Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. When he later provided his War Service Record to the University of Sydney, he wrote that he had served in France and Salonica (sic) from 1915 to 1917.¹¹ It seems that his Oxford Battalion trained locally over the next year. It did not have standard issue uniforms until Spring 1915, finally shipping out to Boulogne, France on 21 September 1915.¹² Childe was apparently rejected, for military (and naval?) service, probably on health grounds, although he is reported to have 'drilled with civilians' in the final months of 1914.¹³ Meanwhile in Sydney, Childe and Henry's friend, HV Evatt, was selected towards the end of 1914 as the NSW Rhodes Scholar for 1915, apparently hoping to join Balliol, Queen's or St John's Colleges at Oxford. However, for unclear reasons, sometime between selection on 13 November 1914 and confirmation on 24 November 1914, Evatt withdrew his application.¹⁴ Thereafter, it was awarded to the only other 1914 applicant. It is unknown when Childe found out that Evatt would not be coming to Oxford and it is also unknown when Evatt failed the physical for his attempted enlistment in Australia. Childe's future Oxford friend, David Belloch, was also rejected on health grounds in 1914, as he was recuperating from typhoid and severe weight loss.¹⁵ Like most of the English-born Oxford undergraduates, Belloch was several years younger than the Australian scholarship students. Unlike others in Britain who were later granted conditional exemption

¹⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹³ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 167.

¹⁴ University of Sydney Archives, Rhodes Scholarship – NSW Selection Committee, S93, Item 1, Minute Book 1904-1939, 13 November 1914 and 24 November 1914.

¹⁵ Albert William Wetter, " " I Deny Your Authority to Try My Conscience": Conscripted and Conscientious Objectors In Britain During the Great War," (2019). (Honors Projects. 117. <https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/honorsprojects/117>), 59-60.

after the 1916 introduction of conscription, he would volunteer to serve with the (Quakers) Friends Ambulance Unit, a notoriously dangerous battlefield role.¹⁶

The teaching staff who had journeyed to Australia for the 84th Meeting of the BAAS returned late for the start of the new academic year, as their original travel arrangements had been upset by the declaration of war. Around early October, one noted in his diary that he expected to arrive three weeks after the start of term; instead, his steamship did not dock in England until the first week of November. It is uncertain when Professor Myres returned. He had given a public lecture in Melbourne on either 12 or 18 August – there are contradictory newspaper reports¹⁷ – and he probably continued to Sydney for at least the beginning of the BAAS program there. It is unclear which ship(s) facilitated his return to Britain, and whether he sailed via the Suez Canal route, or the Cape of Good Hope, or the Canadian/ North American ports, or the relatively new Panama Canal. Contemporaneously, there was a flood of refugees from Belgium. From around October 1914 to late 1915, an estimated 200,000 Belgians sought asylum in Britain, receiving refuge in cities and towns, including Oxford.¹⁸ In the early months of the war, accounts of the assault on Belgium galvanised communities across the Empire; young men enlisted, while women and older men organised donations.

Childe's course enrolments are surprisingly ambiguous, in that they do not readily mesh with the expectations of his two year postgraduate scholarship. He apparently enrolled, as per the convention for foreign students at that time, in Oxford's equivalent of the BA (*Litterae Humaniores*, colloquially, 'Lit Hum' or, 'the Greats') even though the course content was likely similar to what he had completed in Sydney.¹⁹ It focussed on Greek Classical literature and philosophy. This was eventually conferred when he successfully completed relevant examinations in June 1917, towards the end of his third academic year at Oxford. Initially, he also enrolled in a Diploma of Classical Archaeology, which focussed

¹⁶ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 89-90. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁷ "Who are the Greeks?" *Leader*, 15 August 1914, 42; "Who are the Greeks?" *Darling Downs Gazette*, 19 August 1914, 6.

¹⁸ Winter, "Oxford and the First World War", 6. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁹ Champion, "Childe and Oxford," 20. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

on Classical Greek archaeology.²⁰ Childe also commenced a BLitt (*Baccalaureus Litterarum*), although the precise start date is unclear. The program was intended to be a two year research project, guided by a supervisor, culminating in a thesis.²¹ The prevailing Oxford convention was that the student submitted a proposal for the project to the relevant Faculty Board and, if this was approved, the Board would appoint a Supervisor with appropriate expertise.²²

As has been widely reported over the years, Childe's BLitt dissertation was accepted in June 1916, towards the end of his second academic year at Oxford. Australian newspapers reported in September 1916, that it was titled, *The Influence of Indo-Europeans in Prehistoric Greece*, and its examiners for Childe's thesis were Professor Arthur Evans, and Professor Ronald Burrows from King's College London, both regarded as having specialist Minoan expertise.²³ This further suggests that Evans did not have a supervisory role.²⁴ In spite of efforts by researchers, an extant copy of the thesis has not been found.²⁵ The Oxford University Gazette, however, specified its title as *Indo-European Influences in the Hellenic Civilization (down to the end of the Bronze Age)*.²⁶ Surprisingly, the late Professor Sherratt wrote of the thesis, "Its combination of archaeological evidence with a wider perspective from comparative philology is characteristic of his early work", giving the *impression* that a readable copy existed, at least within his own reading experience. This, however, would be inconsistent with other scholarly accounts. At some stage, Childe withdrew from the Diploma, although it is unclear whether the *commencement* of the BLitt

²⁰ Green, *Prehistorian*, 14.

²¹ John Linton Myres, *The provision for historical studies at Oxford: surveyed in a letter to the president of the American historical association on the occasion of its meeting in California, 1915*. Vol. 96. F. Hall, (1915): 9-10.

²² Timothy Champion, pers. comm. 12 March 2022.

²³ "Personal," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 2 September 1916, 10; *The Western Australian*, 22 September 1916, 9. Special thanks to Dr. Meheux for bringing this to my attention. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁴ contra Sally Green, "V. Gordon Childe: A biographical sketch," *Australian Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (1990): 20.

²⁵ Green, *Prehistorian*, 18; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 57; Sherratt, "Childe: archaeology and intellectual history", 155.

²⁶ *Oxford University Gazette*, 13 July 1916, p. 589. Further thanks to Dr. Meheux for alerting me to the 17 January 2023 upload of the newly-digitised *Gazettes* of the period.

https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/1915-1916_-_Vol_46/21905559

research was related to the Diploma course withdrawal or not (contra Sherratt).²⁷ Among other things, this would impact the nature and timing of communications regarding the BLitt.²⁸

Even within the constraints of censorship, the war front accounts were grim. Trench warfare began in France in October 1914, although it would be some time before the scale of its horrors would become evident to the non-combatant public. Early in November 1914, Britain's Royal Navy (RN) suffered its first major naval defeat. Two British armoured cruisers, *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*, were sunk in a battle with German warships off the coast of Coronel, Chile. Over 1,650 British officers and crew were killed.²⁹ In November, 1914, the 500-year old Ottoman Empire joined the war, siding with Germany. The demands upon RN resources in the Mediterranean grew rapidly and they would soon be further stretched by Britain's campaign around Türkiye's Gallipoli peninsula. Just before Christmas 1914, British newspapers reported that the Coronel defeat had been avenged at the Falkland Islands on December 8, 1914. The German warships, *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* had all been sunk; 1,871 Germans were killed and 215 captured.³⁰

Hilary 1915 – January to early March

It is unknown how many casualties the British Expeditionary Force/ Entente allies acknowledged by the end of 1914, but an increasing number of families were experiencing personal grief. In early January 1915, Professor Evans wrote to a longstanding, Italian archaeological colleague, Dr F Halbherr. Evans described his family's sorrow at the recent death of a nephew at Ypres and expressed his anger at Germany's militarist policies stating, "The Germans have set back the standard of humanity in war over a thousand years! ... Like others, I have been taking in Belgian refugees".³¹ He added that Britain hoped to soon have

²⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

²⁹ Beesly, *Room 40*, 76. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁰ "Enemy Cruiser sunk of Wilhelmshaven," *The Times*, 6 November 1914, 9; "British loss in the Pacific," *The Times*, 7 November 1914, 5; "German story of the loss of the Flagship," *The Times*, 7 November 1914, 9.

³¹ Nicoletta Momigliano, "Federico Halbherr and Arthur Evans: an archaeological correspondence (1894-1917)," *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 44, no. 2 (2002): 310.

2,000,000 troops in the field, continuing that Britain had assisted in the recapture of Serbia's capital, Belgrade, "but the story may not be told yet". Given that Italy remained a part of the Triple Alliance, albeit officially 'neutral', the statement seems unnecessarily informative. Or not. It would later be asserted that Evans' home, Youlbury, was the site of late night clandestine meetings, prior to the signing of the Treaty of London in April 1915, whereby Italy agreed not to participate in hostilities.³²

The maritime dangers continued to escalate. On 4 February 1915, Germany announced that as of 18 February 1915, it would consider all the waters around the British Isles, with the exception of a passage north of Scotland, to be a War Zone. This would impact the mail steamers, passenger services and general merchant shipping. In part, this was a response to the way in which submarine (English)/ U-boat (Unterseeboot/ German) development was changing both the nature of naval strategy and the legal conventions of merchant shipping during wartime. Submarines had originally been conceived of as defensive vessels, however, both British and German navies were beginning to recognise their *offensive* uses. Their low visibility could generate doubt and stress around the uncertainty of their presence or absence. Further, the warning, boarding and inspection clauses of the international conventions, which had been designed to protect merchant shipping during wartime, were rendered impractical. It was not feasible for captured merchant crews to be taken aboard submarines. Consequently, the declaration of a maritime war zone would mean that *merchant* shipping was at greater risk of being accidentally harmed by the submarines/ U-boats that both navies were deploying.³³

In spite of the risks of maritime travel, as well as the wartime ban on overland travel, multiple strands of evidence now appear to confirm that Childe was able to organise a six week research trip for his BLitt to the then-neutral Greece, as well as to Crete in the March/ April portion of 1915. Given the geopolitical complications of the times, this appears to have been an organisational feat. It has long been accepted that Childe must have visited Greece prior to the publication of his first academic paper in November 1915 and it was

³² Albrecht-Carrié, "Treaty of London 1915," 364-367; May, "Seton-Watson", 44; MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 262.

³³ Beesly, *Room 40*, 87-89; "Short ways with submarines," *The Times*, 3 February 1915, 6; "Rival "Blockades"," *The Times*, 5 February 1915, 9.

previously suggested that this had probably occurred during his journey to Britain in 1914.³⁴ It is now clear that this was not viable.³⁵ It further appears that Childe may have later submitted a report to the London office of the British School in Athens (BSA) documenting his trip.³⁶ This may confirm Gill's assertion that Childe was admitted as an Associate of the BSA in February, 1915.³⁷ Confusingly, however, the later lists of BSA Associates through the decades *do not* specify Childe as an Associate, ever.³⁸ This raises the question, 'why was he *not* acknowledged in the later official lists of Associates?'

The dates and duration of the research trip seem further confirmed by his 1917 passport renewal form, which states that he had a passport issued in February 1915, described as "No 3877 Foreign Office". The form further notes that he returned to the United Kingdom in April, 1915.³⁹ We do not know the precise date of the 1915 application, or what other details pertaining to destinations and referees the application may have been included. Finally, these research dates fit well with the Oxford terms; the 1915 January term ended on Saturday, 13 March and the April term commenced on 25 April 1915.

On 18 February 1915, Childe became a member of the Oxford University Fabian Society (OUFS).⁴⁰ Britain's Fabian Society had been formed in 1884 and was popular with the upper middle class intelligentsia. This was a social milieu that was likely to have been both attractive and familiar to Childe, who had come from a similar cultural background in Australia, albeit a specifically antipodean one. The OUFS was its 'on campus', affiliated body, originally established in 1895 by Classics scholar and Tutor at Oxford's St John's College, Sidney Ball. Other prominent Fabians included Sir Oliver Lodge, a prominent physicist and the 1913-1914 President of BAAS, George Bernard Shaw, the renowned

³⁴ Green, *Prehistorian*, 17.

³⁵ Champion, "Childe and Oxford", 21.

³⁶ Timothy Champion, pers. comm. 12 July 2022.

³⁷ David WJ Gill, "Sifting the Soil of Greece: The Early Years of the British School at Athens (1886-1919)," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement* (2011): 62.

³⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

³⁹ National Archives File KV2/2148, passport renewal application dated 5 July 1917 with annotation dated 12 July 1917.

⁴⁰ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 52.

playwright and socialist, and Sidney Webb, an economist who, with his wife, Beatrice Webb, founded the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1895.

The Fabians endorsed a broadly socialist agenda, supporting policies such as a minimum wage, universal healthcare, and the then-popular ‘guild socialism’, a movement closely associated with the Ruskin/ Arts and Crafts/ William Morris appreciation of artisanal skill over mechanised, industrial production lines. They envisaged gradual social and political change, valuing rationality and consensus.⁴¹ In 1912, the organisation had set up the Fabian Research Department, later renamed the Labour Research Department, which was tasked with exploring issues related to labour relations and regulations. In later years, both Childe and his Oxford friend, Rajani Palme Dutt, would be involved with its London office, initially at the Fabian Society premises and later in the Labour Party offices.⁴² With regard to other *personal* convictions, the Fabian membership hosted a plurality of views. Some advocated secularism (tolerance of diverse spiritual beliefs) while others were self-described atheists. Similarly, some considered the armed forces as an essential part of State infrastructure while others were conscientious objectors on religious or political grounds.

Towards the end of Winter (Hilary) term on Tuesday, 2 March 1915, the committed pacifist philosopher, Bertrand Russell, introduced a debate hosted by the OUFS, asserting that ‘Britain was largely responsible for the war’.⁴³ The outcome of the debate is unknown and it is unclear if Childe attended the debate although, given his involvement with university debating in Sydney, it seems likely. This, perhaps, may have been the first time that he heard arguments for pacifism presented publicly and skilfully.

Easter vacation 1915 – March to April

The term ended eleven days later on Saturday, 13 March. Childe left on his research trip around that time and it seems likely that the journey was by sea, rather than overland. It seems that he went to Athens first, meeting up with the new BSA Director, Alan Wace.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 50.

⁴² Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 173, 186-187; Patricia Pugh, *Educate, Agitate, Organize Library Editions: Political Science Volume 59: One Hundred Years of Fabian Socialism* (Routledge, 2013), 124-132.

⁴³ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 175.

⁴⁴ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 267.

Given Childe’s academic interests, Wace, thirteen years older than Childe, would seem an ideal mentor. Wace had trained at Cambridge, where his tutor, Robert Alexander Neil, “had a strong interest in philology and Sanskrit”.⁴⁵ Wace had been undertaking research in the region, especially in Thessaly and Macedonia, for some years. He commenced as Director of the BSA in November 1914, just after the Ottoman Empire joined the war against Britain.⁴⁶



Figure 6.1: Map of Balkan region with 1912 anticipated borders
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Balkans_1912-13.jpg

The BSA connection is particularly interesting because we now know that from at least the beginnings of the Balkan conflict in 1912, it had a pivotal role as a provider of intelligence

⁴⁵ Gill, "BSA, 1886-1919", 61. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

personnel. Its scholars had especial familiarity with regional geography, culture and local languages. Although this contribution is not particularly hidden, it has not been widely discussed, partly because it reveals a disregard for Greece's sovereignty.⁴⁷ Gill further states that Childe had been "supported" by (Professor) Myres and Hogarth, Keeper of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, to work with Wace on prehistoric, mainland pottery, implying that they had proposed him as a BSA Associate.⁴⁸ This would appear to be consistent with both earlier and later developments in regional Intelligence coordination that involved various archaeologists working across the region. It also now appears that Childe may have provided the BSA with a report of his trip, although that is not currently available.⁴⁹

Although Greece was maintaining its neutrality, the region was becoming increasingly tense. The Triple Entente forces, consisting of the military and naval resources of Britain, France, Russia, and their respective colonies, endeavoured to secure the strategically important maritime access between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This had led to increasingly bloody skirmishes in the Dardanelles strait, between Entente and Turkish forces in the first months of 1915. In early March, the Greek island of Lemnos, approximately 100km west of the contested waterway, had become a designated supply line post for the escalating Entente campaign.⁵⁰ In particular, Lemnos became host to some advance brigades – volunteers who had enlisted at their earliest opportunity and had been shipped from Australia and New Zealand to Egypt, where they had then been assembled into several divisions that came to be known as the ANZACs (Anzacs), the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.⁵¹

Portentously, Thursday, 18 March 1915, was a disastrous day for the Entente. An armada of eighteen British and French warships assembled for an attack on Turkiye's Gallipoli forts but

⁴⁷ Richard Clogg, "Academics at War: The British School at Athens during the First World War," *British School at Athens Studies* (2009): 163; David WJ Gill, "Harry Pirie-Gordon: Historical research, journalism and intelligence gathering in the Eastern Mediterranean (1908–18)," *Intelligence and National Security* 21, no. 6 (2006): 1045-1046. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁸ Gill, "BSA, 1886-1919", 62. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁴⁹ Timothy Champion, pers. comm. 12 July 2022.

⁵⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵¹ Pale G Halpern, *The naval war in the Mediterranean: 1914-1918* (Routledge, 1987), 62-65, 68, 71; Yiannakis, "Lemnos Heritage of Gallipoli", 111.

instead of victory, three warships were sunk, three were disabled, more than 700 sailors died, and there were no strategic gains.⁵² Although the military operations were being coordinated via Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt, it seems likely that information was readily available in Athens, Greece. First, Britain had access to both the more secure, cabled telegraphic communications in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as W/T options. Second, DG Hogarth, a former Director of the BSA and one of Childe's sponsors, was already liaising with TE Lawrence and Military Intelligence in Egypt.⁵³ Like Myres, Hogarth would also commence active duties with the RNVR in the eastern Mediterranean.

In late March 1915, Wace wrote to Professor Evans in England, providing him with Childe's general itinerary. This both implies that Evans was in England during the Easter vacation and that Wace did not expect him to be particularly familiar with Childe and his research. Wace reported that he had first sent Childe to Crete for five days (probably around the third week of March) and that he was 'now' leaving to tour some Peloponnese sites before returning to Athens for (Orthodox) Easter. Thereafter, Childe would go to Chaeronea and Thebes, just north of Athens, before returning promptly to Oxford. Wace also stated that he would like to have Childe on a future "prehistoric dig in Macedonia".⁵⁴

Childe probably left Greece around 20 April 1915. Although he had had a busy research schedule planned, it seems unlikely that he would have been oblivious or disinterested in the complicated, geopolitical maelstrom that was building, just across the Aegean Sea, in the Dardanelles and the Gallipoli Peninsula. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the time, his analytical capacities, his political interests, along with the very worldly involvements of his primary mentors, it also seems likely that he would have been in a position to check his impressions of 'mood' with the informed knowledge of his hosts.

Trinity 1915 – April to June

We now know that the maritime losses of March 1915 triggered a series of tragic decisions, leading to the failed invasion of Türkiye's Gallipoli Peninsula. This commenced on Sunday,

⁵² <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/where-australians-served/gallipoli/timeline>

⁵³ Fraser, "The Hogarth Archive", 6-8.

⁵⁴ MacGillivray, *Sir Arthur Evans*, 267. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

25 April 1915, eventually culminating in the deaths of tens of thousands of Anzac, European and Turkish combatants.⁵⁵ Given that Childe was likely back at Oxford around the start of term, actually on 25 April, he must have left Greece well before the worst of it. However, having been so recently nearby, he was likely attuned over the following weeks, to any available reports of the events there.⁵⁶ We also have little idea with whom, besides his professors, he may have ‘debriefed’ on his return.⁵⁷ Assuming that they remained friends, he might have shared some experiences with fellow Australian, HA Henry, however, his new, politically progressive friends among the British undergraduates were mostly not even of voting age yet, accentuating the experiential gap. Similarly, the extant mail censorship regulations probably precluded detailed correspondence with Australian confidantes like HV Evatt. If, like his friend, Dutt, he kept a diary at this stage in his life, it has likely ceased to exist.

During May 1915, there are contradictory accounts of fissions in the student organisations at Oxford, but in essence there seems to have been some degree of membership realignment from the OUFS to the Oxford University Socialist Society (OUSS), which apparently was a ‘confederation’ of special interest groups.⁵⁸ Although Childe probably retained his OUFS membership, he was to take on intermittent secretarial roles in 1916 for both the OUSS, as well as other groupings that were more or less anti-conscriptionist and socialist in their outlooks.⁵⁹ Among the other aspects that are entirely unclear, is the degree to which Childe’s extra-curricular involvements were known by his professors, and the extent to which they were endorsed or disdained.

Meanwhile, London’s various scholarly Societies, often based at Burlington House in Piccadilly, tried as far as possible to maintain normal schedules such as semi-quarterly meetings. On Tuesday, 4 May 1915, Professor Myres presented a talk at the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies – publisher of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (JHS) – on his

⁵⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁵⁸ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 53; Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 173.

⁵⁹ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 170-174.

1913 Cyprus excavations. These had been funded by the Government of Cyprus and supplemented with a grant from BAAS.⁶⁰ It is unknown which of the Vice-Presidents (VP) were in attendance; VPs included Professor Evans, Mr. Hogarth, Professor Sayce, Professor Gilbert Murray, Sir Frederick Kenyon and the Gardner brothers. Some Council members, however, such as Mr Wace were unlikely to have been in the country at that time.⁶¹ It was more the rule than the exception, that office holders held similar positions in multiple Societies. Further, the various Societies often held their meetings at Burlington House.

Several days later, angry anti-German rioting erupted across the country when Cunard's *Lusitania*, sailing from New York to Liverpool, was sunk by a German submarine, killing 1,195 civilians.⁶² This probably – non-logically – later contributed to a media conflation of 'conscientious objection on political grounds' and 'pacifism', with support for Germany and its perceived militarism, aka being 'pro-German'.⁶³ In the last week of May, there were further naval losses in the Dardanelles; RN warships *Triumph* and *Majestic* were sunk and more than one hundred sailors and officers died.

By early June 1915, public debate was growing around the benefits and problems of legislating 'national service' and whether this should mandate military participation. Britain's losses, especially in western Europe, were horrendous; it was increasingly likely that recruits would be slaughtered faster than they were volunteering – this was the ugly arithmetic that presaged the calls for conscription. *The Times* published a letter from "fifteen heads of Oxford colleges, led by Edward Armstrong, pro-provost of The Queen's College"⁶⁴ arguing that conscription would be a more efficient allocation of resources than relying on voluntary enlistment.⁶⁵ It provoked strong opposition from some Oxford students, who refuted the rights of 'old men' to claim support for a proposal that had been

⁶⁰ SPHS, Proceedings, Session 1914-15, xlv, xlvii-xlviii.

⁶¹ SPHS, Officers and Council for 1914-15.

⁶² Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 182. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁶³ Meheux "Conscientious objectors", 168.

⁶⁴ Meheux "Conscientious objectors", 170.

⁶⁵ "The need of the hour," *The Times*, 2 June 1915, p7.

rejected in multiple University debates.⁶⁶ In the midst of these events, Childe presented a lecture, 'Labour and Education in Australia' to an OUSS group which described the successes of State socialism in Australia.⁶⁷ Further, in June 1915, according to Green, Childe wrote to his father, describing his visit to a paternal aunt in Shropshire, Frances Baldwin Childe, regarded as a family historian and of affluent means.⁶⁸

Summer vacation 1915 – July to September

The bloody mess of the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaigns continued through most of 1915. Although the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) had had a resounding success in 1914 by capturing the Pacific's German colonies at New Guinea and Nauru in the first month of the war, it was the events at Gallipoli in 1915 that were to have such a formative influence on Australia's sense of its national identity. Gallipoli was the first major overseas campaign of a federated Australia, yet yielding the leadership of its forces to the British generals had had catastrophic results. By the end of July 1915, almost 4,000 Australian men – many from Queensland – had died at Gallipoli; a month later, that toll had risen to over 6,500.⁶⁹ In the coming months and years, tales of the savage horror of those battlefields would seep through but in the early days, the dominant stories were of courage and adventure. Consequently, over 100,000 *more* Australians would enlist from April to October 1915.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as families received the death notifications for their loved ones, or heard the hospital bed accounts of mangled survivors and their carers, a collective grief began to roil across the nation.

There are few records identifying Childe's activities through the summer break from early July to late September 1915, however, it seems likely that he was busy with his BLitt, as well as writing what would become his first academic publication – the paper on Minyan

⁶⁶ The signatories of the refutation are unknown. Childe may or may not have been one.

⁶⁷ Meheux "Conscientious objectors", 167. See also OUSS Minute Book, 4 June 1915, Katie Meheux, pers comm 7 August 2022.

⁶⁸ Green, *Prehistorian*, 20-21.

⁶⁹ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/gallipoli/fatalities>

⁷⁰ <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/military-organisation/enlistment>

ceramics in 1915's JHS, a peer-reviewed journal published each November.⁷¹ While not explicitly drawing any connection with possible Indo-European cultural influence in prehistoric Greece – his BLitt topic – the article examined the dating of 'Minyan' ceramics from various sites in the central Greek region, evaluating their potential relationship with ancient Troy, a site located several kilometres from the Dardanelles strait and Gallipoli Peninsula in modern Turkiye. In the opening paragraph, Childe stated that he visited the Chaeronea Museum, roughly 150 km north of Athens, later comparing these ceramics with others that he examined in Athens' National Museum. Thereafter, he thanked the BSA's Director, Alan Wace, for his assistance.⁷²

The whereabouts of his (probable) BLitt supervisor, Professor Myres, is ambiguous during the period. Myres was later to state that he left Oxford in July 1915, committing himself to wartime Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) activities.⁷³ Alternatively, the Oxford University Gazette suggests that this occurred some months later.⁷⁴ Whatever his arrival date in the eastern Mediterranean, he remained in the region for the remainder of the war, later moving to Athens for Intelligence operations.⁷⁵ Thus, the extent of Myres' engagement with Childe's BLitt dissertation is unknown.

Meanwhile, Henry was promoted to Captain on 12 July 1915. He shipped out in September, initially to France before continuing on to Salonika. Childe's Sydney friend, HD Hall, now on a Woolley postgraduate scholarship, arrived at Oxford in September, joining Balliol College.⁷⁶ In the coming years, he too would be involved with the Fabian Society in London, especially while writing his treatise on Responsible Government in the dominions.⁷⁷ After returning to Australia around 1921 and missing out on some university posts, Hall would teach WEA courses, before accepting a position with the League of Nations in Geneva in

⁷¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷² Champion 2009:21-22; Childe, "Minyan ware", 196, 204-207.

⁷³ John Linton Myres, "Excavations in Cyprus, 1913," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 41 (1940): 53.

⁷⁴ *Oxford University Gazette*, 15 March 1916, 364. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁷⁵ Compton Mackenzie, *First Athenian Memories*. Vol. 2. (Cassell, 1931), 254.

⁷⁶ Fletcher, "Hessell Duncan Hall".

⁷⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

1927.⁷⁸ He probably brought news and insights, and perhaps a range of Australian perspectives that might not normally survive censorship regulations.⁷⁹ Australia's censorship administration had, apparently, become routine. GV Portus, from whom Childe would later seek employment and who, coincidentally, had been NSW's 2007 Rhodes Scholar, had been persuaded by the then Chief Military Censor of NSW, Lieutenant-General J. T. Wilson, also the University of Sydney's Professor of Anatomy, to join the Office as Assistant Military Censor for three years.⁸⁰ Portus wrote, over thirty years later,

“There are two reasons why I will not say anything about these years. One is that I am pledged not to do so. The other is that there is very little of interest to say. They were barren and useless years”.⁸¹

In Athens, Mr Wace offered welcome accommodation in late September 1915 to Compton Mackenzie, a successful novelist and recently appointed as the new ‘Head of Intelligence’ for the region. He would later be replaced by Professor Myres. Mackenzie had previously spent several months at Gallipoli at the invitation of the General Ian Hamilton, Commander of the British Expeditionary Forces there. When it became clear that victory was not imminent, Hamilton had Mackenzie transferred to Athens.⁸² Thereafter, Mackenzie lunched with Mr Wace daily, at the BSA Director's house.⁸³

Michaelmas 1915 – October to December

The last few months of 1915 are opaque, yet they seem likely to have had a bearing on Childe's later adversarial relationships with some members of the University of Sydney Council. At its 6 December 1915 meeting, the Council agreed to pay an additional (third) year's stipend to Childe.⁸⁴ There is no indication in the Minutes of *when* Childe submitted

⁷⁸ Fletcher, "Hessell Duncan Hall".

⁷⁹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁸⁰ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁸¹ Garnet Vere Portus, *Happy highways* (Melbourne University Press, 1953), 163.

⁸² Mark David Kaufman, “Spyography: Compton Mackenzie, Modernism, and the Intelligence Memoir” *Space Between: Literature & Culture, 1914-1945* 13, (2017): 3-4 of 14. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁸³ Mackenzie, *First Athenian Memories*, 194.

⁸⁴ University of Sydney Archives, Senate Minutes [G1/1], Minute Book 1913-1920, 6 December 1915, 273.

the request, or for what reasons the Cooper Graduate Scholarship Committee supported it. It does, however, appear to have been a rare event. It implies that the Council believed this graduate student – after his first year at Oxford – was worthy of the additional financial support. Although the decision was taken soon after the publication of his first peer-reviewed archaeological article in the November issue of the *JHS*, this does not seem sufficient reason. The only other student to seek an additional stipend in the 1910 to 1920 period was HD Hall; his first request in 1915 was refused and his second request, later in 1916, was only partially granted.⁸⁵

Childe's plans, at the time he had requested the extension, are unknown. Perhaps he had expected to return to Greece, possibly working on a dig with Wace. However, the BSA's traditional activities were curtailed during the war, so ostensibly, Wace became involved with the British Legation and refugee work.⁸⁶ This provided useful opportunities to better monitor the movements of people between Ottoman locales and the broader eastern Mediterranean region. An arrangement appears to have existed, so that even though Wace performed Legation duties, the BSA continued to pay his Director's salary. Wace's daily lunches with Mackenzie also continued, although Mackenzie now had separate accommodation in Athens. Mackenzie's Intelligence superior had also assigned the BSA's Librarian, Mr FW Hasluck, to assist Mackenzie in compiling notes on regional personalities. By the time Mackenzie departed in 1917, handing over to the Intelligence role to Professor Myres, there were reputedly around 23,000 index cards.⁸⁷

Hilary 1916 – January to early March

The early months of 1916 are a swirl of events but connections between them remain indistinct and tangled. Yet, they must have been pivotal with regard to Childe's perspective on the conduct of the war. In the northern winter of 1916, Britain drafted its Military Service Act, passed by parliament on 27 January 1916, while in Queensland, Australia, a committee was established to determine the name, date and form of a worthy

⁸⁵ University of Sydney Archives, Senate Minutes [G1/1], Minute Book 1913-1920, 14 June 1915, 209.

⁸⁶ Clogg, "Academics at War", 168; Mackenzie, *First Athenian Memories*, 194-197.

⁸⁷ Clogg, "Academics at War", 171; John Nowell Linton Myres, "Commander JL Myres, RNVR: The Blackbeard of the Aegean: a Lecture Delivered at New College, Oxford on 29th May, 1979,". *No. 10. Myres Memorial Lectures*, (1980): 35.

commemoration ceremony, that would also “console the bereaved and call the nation to penitence for the sin of war”.⁸⁸ Brisbane’s Canon Garland was already regarded as a formidable organiser; he applied this talent, as Secretary of the convened committee, to the design and implementation of a suitable tribute.⁸⁹ The event was to be called Anzac Day and it would be inaugurally held on 25 April 1916, not only in the cities and provincial towns of Australia, but also in London and Cairo. Another complicating factor to evaluate, is that Australia’s latest Prime Minister, Labor’s WM (Billy) Hughes, sailed from Sydney on 20 January 1916, and would spend much of the first half of 1916 in Britain on government business.⁹⁰ Australia’s former Labor Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, had also been in London since the beginning of 1916, having accepted the position of High Commissioner there, after illness forced him to resign the Prime Ministership in late October.⁹¹ Fisher remained in that role until 22 April 1921. The complicated relationships between these Australian figures, and their relationships with various members of the British government, are beyond the scope of this thesis. Over time, however, Hughes became an ardent supporter of conscription, while Fisher did not support its introduction in Australia.⁹² After Hughes’ return to Australia, he would be expelled from the Labor Party.

On 8 February 1916, Childe was elected as a Student-Associate for the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (SPHS). He was one of three Student-Associates elected during the 1915-1916 year; little is known of the other two.⁹³ The membership provided various privileges, including reading rights at their library in Bloomsbury Square and the professional networking at meetings, at the standard Member’s rate of one guinea per annum, payable January 1st each year.⁹⁴ The Minute Book for the Society’s Council

⁸⁸ Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance", 58.

⁸⁹ Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance", 65-66.

⁹⁰ Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI – Australia During The War* (Angus & Robertson, 1937), 320. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁹¹ DJ Murphy, "Fisher, Andrew (1862-1928)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online 22 October 2021 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fisher-andrew-378/text10613> ; Scott, *Official History Vol XI*, 302-303.

⁹² Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and Villians*", 184.

⁹³ SPHS 1915-1916 – Student Associates, xxxvii. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁹⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Meetings does not indicate who proposed and seconded his membership. Although Professor Myres was a Life Member, he was unable to attend meetings given his RNVR commitments. After the war, Myres became one of the Society's Vice Presidents in 1922-1923 session, and interestingly, Childe was elected as a Member in 1922.⁹⁵

Simultaneously, pressure was building around the imminent introduction of conscription in Britain. The Military Service Act would allow single, British-born men, from 18 to 41 years of age to be called up, unless deemed to be bona fide conscientious objectors, or holding a legislatively-exempted position.⁹⁶ Those who had previously been rejected on medical grounds could be reconsidered, while men claiming an exemption had to apply by 2 March 1916 and face a tribunal. In Oxford, hearings took place, mostly over the next several weeks, on two nights per week, for around two hours per night. Applicants often only had five to ten minutes to persuade the tribunal of the sincerity of their claim; some described tribunal decisions as quixotic. Claims were either rejected or, if accepted, deemed '*total*' or, more likely, '*conditional*', meaning the applicants should undertake non-combatant, national service activities. Those who ignored conditional call-ups were arrested. Although only a tiny proportion – less than half of 1% – of potential conscripts claimed exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection, either political or religious, it was an emotionally charged time.⁹⁷

Easter vacation 1916 – March to April

Although Childe was not personally subject to the new Act⁹⁸, a number of his younger, English, activist friends were; some were later arrested and imprisoned, experiencing a range of consequences. We do not have evidence that he attended any of the tribunals as an observer, but it seems likely. Several of his friends had been found 'conditionally exempt' and, after ignoring conditional call-ups, they were arrested soon after. One of them, Raymond Postgate, was the Secretary of the Oxford University branch of the Union of

⁹⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

⁹⁶ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 57-58.

⁹⁷ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 169, 175, 179, 177, 183, 188.

⁹⁸ Military Service Act 1916, First Schedule, Section 1 (1).

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1916/104/pdfs/ukpga_19160104_en.pdf

Democratic Control (UDC), a national, political organisation formed in September 1914.⁹⁹ Its founders included several British parliamentarians – the Liberal members CP Trevelyan and Arthur Ponsonby, and the Labour member, Ramsay MacDonald. They asserted that secret diplomacy had entangled Britain in the war, lured by a promise of future territorial spoils arising from redrawn European borders and a redistribution of far-flung colonial territories. They campaigned for foreign policy matters to be debated on the floor of parliament rather than behind closed doors. However, the influential British newspapers reported this dissent as ‘pro-German’ and by implication, dehumanised and ‘not British’. This encouraged emotional, polarised responses from their readers; thus, the UDC leaders and supporters were frequently reviled during the war.¹⁰⁰

In March 1916, prior to his arrest, Oxford student Postgate advised national leader Ponsonby that Childe would take over from Postgate as Secretary of the UDC’s Oxford University branch. This suggests that in spite of any ambiguities around Childe’s *initial* support for the war, at least by early 1916, Postgate and Childe trusted each other. Their friendship would continue in the post-war years. Unfortunately, there are no longer any extant records for the UDC’s University branch, however, it was considered to be the primary anti-war voice at Oxford.¹⁰¹ Childe also joined anti-Conscription groups that Postgate was involved with, such as the National Council Against Conscription (NCAC) and No Conscription Fellowship (NCF), although the precise sequence of events is unclear.¹⁰² During Postgate’s month of incarceration around April 1916, Professor Gilbert Murray and respected Oxford Quaker, Dr HT Gillett – both probably friends of the well-connected Postgate family – advocated successfully for Postgate’s release due to a lurking heart weakness.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 171.

¹⁰⁰ Alison Rebecca Steigerwald, *Opposition and reaction: The Union of Democratic Control, the press, and the British government’s suppression of dissent during the First World War* (Master’s thesis, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2015), 2-5, 18.

¹⁰¹ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 172.

¹⁰² Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 170.

¹⁰³ Meheux, “Conscientious objectors”, 188.

Trinity 1916 – April to June



Figure 6.2: Inaugural Anzac Day commemoration at Westminster Abbey, 1916.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0001102?image=57>

By the time that Tuesday, 25 April 1916 approached, commemorations had been organised not only across Australia but also in Britain and Egypt. London's event involved a solemn march by 2,000 Anzacs, mostly from Waterloo Junction, to Westminster Abbey, where the King and (Queen) joined them in a service. Thereafter, a luncheon for the troops was held

at the Hotel Cecil.¹⁰⁴ Similar events were held in Australian cities; in Sydney, following the service, there was a luncheon served at the Sydney Town Hall.¹⁰⁵

The inclusivity of the service – in particular, with its minutes of silence – is attributed to the insights of Canon Garland, who realised that its elements had to be acceptable to doctrines with different ideas about how the dead might be publicly honoured. His especial sensitivity to the relevant issues is attributed to his unusual background – the Irish-born Garland had been raised a strict Anglican, but after migrating to Australia, he was converted to the Tractarian sect of Protestantism; this gave him a deeper understanding of what would be acceptable to different faiths.¹⁰⁶

David Belloch, another of Childe's Oxford friends who had been granted conditional exemption, made the relatively unusual choice to voluntarily join the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU). This was an essential but dangerous battlefield service organised by the Quakers. Prior to the introduction of conscription, he, like Childe, had tried to enlist in September 1914, however, he was deemed medically unfit, given the more stringent standards of the first months. Almost eighteen months along, like other activist friends protesting the erosion of civil liberties, he chose to claim conscientious objection on *political* grounds, even though his personal medical condition was relatively poor.¹⁰⁷

Belloch's personnel card, now digitally available, indicates that he joined the FAU on Tuesday, 25 April 1916.¹⁰⁸ Although this may be pure coincidence, it is notable that it occurred on the same day as the inaugural Anzac Day service of 25 April. The planned Anzac events had received significant coverage in Britain and on the day, it was likely an emotionally charged experience. The commemoration was certainly intended to build support for the war effort across the public. In Oxford, even though the student population had now dropped to less than 20% of pre-war levels, the event likely resonated because the

¹⁰⁴ "Public Tribute to Anzacs," *The Times*, 24 April 1916, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Photograph of Town Hall lunch - State Archives & Records New South Wales [NRS4481_ST5793P] (free use).

¹⁰⁶ Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance", 73. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁰⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁰⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Oxford Colleges were increasingly boarding servicemen and treating wounded soldiers, to allay the Colleges' budgetary pressures arising from lost enrolments.¹⁰⁹

Other activist friends of Childe's were also arrested around this time, experiencing various forms of confinement. Although coming from a family with a long tradition of conscientious objection, a fellow Queen's student, Philip (Tal) Davies, unsuccessfully sought *political* exemption.¹¹⁰ He would remain in prison for the next year, eventually being stripped of his scholarship to Oxford. Besides pleading Davies' cause in 1916, Childe also covered his OUSS Secretarial commitments until later in the year. Childe also visited him once in prison in 1917, just before returning to Australia. This 1917 visit was to have unexpected and far-reaching consequences.

Meanwhile, on 25 May 1916, *The Times* reported parliamentary debates in which Ponsonby and MacDonald petitioned Sir Edward Grey, Britain's Foreign Secretary, to negotiate a peace with Germany, rather than continuing to send young men to their deaths.¹¹¹ Although these pleas were unsupported in the House, the *Times* report demonstrates that contrary positions still had some public exposure in May 1916.

On 26 May 1916, Rajani Palme Dutt, a Balliol student, was also arrested. By 1916, Childe and Dutt had become firm friends; they were intellectually well-matched and shared interests in social justice and economic philosophy. In Childe's final months at Oxford, from April to early July 1917, they would also share lodgings.¹¹² Following advocacy from Murray and other supporters, Dutt was eventually released in August 1916.¹¹³

Thus, even while finalising his BLitt dissertation in mid-1916, Childe appears to have been making potentially career-jeopardising choices. He publicly aligned himself with voices critical of wartime government policy. By seeking the advocacy of Professor Murray for Davies and Palme Dutt, he also built connections with distinguished proponents for the principles of civil liberties and individual *conscience*. In subsequent years, he would

¹⁰⁹ Winter, "Oxford and the First World War", 9-10.

¹¹⁰ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 168.

¹¹¹ Steigerwald, *UDC and suppression of opposition*, 52; *The Times*, 25 May 1916, 7.

¹¹² Irving, *Fatal lure*, 61, 65-66.

¹¹³ Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 194-197.

maintain a personal correspondence with Professor Murray on various matters.¹¹⁴ Given the generally hostile environment of the times, especially in the environs of Oxford where such a high proportion of students and dons were already engaged in active service, Childe's heterodox positions likely took especial conviction and courage. Notably, less than ten years later, the UDC positions that were condemned *during* the war would be broadly supported by the voting public. Although the UDC founders were all voted out of Parliament in 1918, public sentiment changed quickly. Ponsonby and Trevelyan switched to the Labour Party and by 1924, all three had been voted back *in* to Parliament. Further, Ramsay MacDonald became Britain's Prime Minister in 1924, and again from 1929 to 1935.¹¹⁵

Childe's BLitt dissertation was examined in late June 1916 by Minoan specialists, Professor Evans and Professor Burrows.¹¹⁶ Thereafter, Childe would have been able to concentrate – academically – on the 'Greats' degree. Given his familiarity with this material, it likely left time and energy for his activist convictions. Curiously, during the following year, there appears to be no evidence of any archaeological activities, other than his continuing annual membership as one of the three Student Associates of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. His 1915-1916 membership continued through the 1916-1917 and 1917-1918 years.¹¹⁷ This provided access to its varied resources at Burlington House, and its Bloomsbury library. Throughout the period, DG Hogarth and Professors Evans, Murray and Sayce retained their Vice President roles.

Summer vacation 1916 – July to September

There does not currently seem to be much information pertaining to Childe during the summer vacation. Besides there being no known references to archaeological matters, there are currently almost no records of contact with family members, other than his paternal uncle, Canon Childe. After Dutt was finally released on 12 August 1916, Childe and Dutt volunteered in London for the Fabian Research Department. Childe may have started

¹¹⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹¹⁵ Steigerwald, *UDC and suppression of opposition*, 99. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹¹⁶ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹¹⁷ SPHS 1916-1917 – Student Associates, xxxiii; SPHS 1917-1918 – Student Associates, xxxiii.

there earlier. He also appears to have volunteered for the National Council of Civil Liberties.¹¹⁸

Probably sometime during this period, Childe received a copy of the May 1916 issue of University of Sydney's *Hermes* magazine. Its Editorial, published while Prime Minister Hughes was still in Britain, strongly argued for the introduction of conscription in Australia. Further, it expressed scorn for those objecting on the grounds of conscience.¹¹⁹ It is unclear who wrote it. The editor was a CG McDonald and although Evatt had been a *Hermes* subeditor in 1915, his role may have been limited in 1916. He was also working as Sir William Cullen's Associate, preparing his MA thesis and President of the (Student) Union. Opposite the editorial, *Hermes* published its inaugural list of alumni casualties – 34 men, of whom 22 had died in the Dardanelles/ Gallipoli campaigns of 1915. This list included Col. MacLaurin, a young barrister probably known to both Childe and Evatt, who had been killed within a fortnight of Childe's return from Greece.¹²⁰ Evatt's brother, Ray (1896-1917) had enlisted in 1915, and would be followed by his brother, Frank (1898-1918) in the coming weeks. Both would later be killed.

Childe was to write – at an uncertain date – a sardonic response to *Hermes'* editorial, questioning the attribution of cowardice to conscientious objectors. This would be published in the magazine's May issue of 1917.¹²¹ On 4 September 1916, possibly around the same time, Meheux has discovered that he also wrote a letter to an English publication, expressing similar sentiments but in less emotive terms.¹²² Differential access to information may have resulted in Childe and Evatt having divergent political opinions for some months. Given the censorship regime, they probably had little or no communication,

¹¹⁸ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 60-61; André Keil, "The National Council for Civil Liberties and the British State during the First World War, 1916–1919", *The English Historical Review* 134, no. 568 (2019): 621, note 6.

¹¹⁹ "Editorial", *Hermes* vol XXII, May 1916, 3-5.

¹²⁰ "Honour List", *Hermes* vol XXII, May 1916, 2.

¹²¹ 'Conscientious Objectors', Childe, *Hermes* vol XXIII, May 1917, 69-70.

¹²² Katie Meheux, pers. comm., 26 June 2022. Childe, 'The double offence of hypocrisy and cowardice', *The Nation*, 16 September 1916, 760.

however, further research is warranted, especially as Evatt seems to have changed his position on conscription by early 1917.

Meanwhile, political tensions in Australia were escalating rapidly; the latter half of 1916 was to be an extremely vitriolic and divisive period in Australian political and social history.¹²³ Prime Minister Hughes had returned to Australia after almost six months in Britain, strongly motivated to introduce Conscription along British lines as soon as possible. While many in Australia's Labor Party had, in 1914, been prepared to support the overseas deployment of a voluntary Infantry Force, public sentiment was changing by 1916. Too many families had already received death notices from the killing fields of France and Gallipoli. On 30 August 1916, Hughes introduced legislation in Federal Parliament for a referendum to change the Constitution, to enable conscription. Campaigning started immediately across the country for the 28 October referendum.¹²⁴ It was reportedly angry and bitter. On 15 September 1916, both Prime Minister Hughes and NSW Premier Holman were expelled from the NSW Labor Party, further intensifying the political turmoil.¹²⁵

Michaelmas 1916 – October to December

At Oxford, Childe and Dutt had long philosophical discussions and involved themselves with political activity during the term. This included visits to Postgate, who was in off campus lodgings. Childe, who had taken on Davies' OUSS Secretarial duties earlier in the year, now passed these over to Dutt. This period appears relatively well-documented for Childe, as Dutt kept a diary and made almost daily entries.¹²⁶

Australia's political convulsions continued; it would be useful to explore how these were covered in British newspapers. Conscription required constitutional change in Australia, and thus required both a majority of voters and a majority of states to agree, via referendum, to

¹²³ Robert Bollard, *In the shadow of Gallipoli: The hidden story of Australia in WWI* (University of NSW Press, 2013), 71-72.

¹²⁴ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹²⁵ Terry Irving and Sean Scalmer, "Labour intellectuals in Australia: Modes, traditions, generations, transformations," *International Review of Social History* 50, no. 1 (2005): 13.

¹²⁶ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 61-62.

the proposed change.¹²⁷ The 1916 conscription referendum took place on 28 October, amid various claims and counter claims of dirty dealing. To Hughes' chagrin, it was defeated.¹²⁸ Although Hughes had been expelled from the Labor Party, he was able to retain Government by forming a new political coalition that was approved by the Governor-General. On 14 November 1916, he formed the National Labor party, building a consensus between conscription-supporting Labor Members of Parliament and members of the Commonwealth Liberal Party.

Hilary 1917 – January to early March

Dutt's diary again seems to be the main source of information for Childe in this period. Irving notes, however, that the first Russian revolution of February (Orthodox calendar)/ March (Western/ Gregorian calendar) 1917, involving the overthrow of the Czar, does not appear to have warranted an entry at that time.¹²⁹

Easter vacation 1917 – March to April

By March 1917, Childe was examining his prospects for the future. The war was well into its third year and no end was in sight. The scale of its carnage is almost unimaginable in the present day, even though we have had horrific anthropic slaughters since, such as the gas chambers of the Second World War and the holocausts of the atomic bombs. Almost all the world's nations were engaged in the war; one of the few exceptions was the United States of America (US). Although Britain had hoped since 1915 to win its support, US President Wilson had resisted all overtures. This would soon change.

There are several letters, dated March 1917, and attributed to Childe's authorship. The earliest one, by date, is *typewritten transcript* of a letter sent by Childe to Australia's London High Commissioner (Andrew Fisher). This copy is in the University of Sydney Archives.¹³⁰ In brief, Childe asked if there was any truth to the rumour that Australian passports would only be issued to (eligible) men who agreed to enlist. Passports, at that stage, were a wartime

¹²⁷ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹²⁸ Bollard, *Shadow of Gallipoli*, 95-98.

¹²⁹ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 65.

¹³⁰ University of Sydney Archives, File M223 (V. G. Childe). See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

innovation, used mostly for national exit purposes, rather than entry ones.¹³¹ Childe emphasised his resistance to forced enlistment.

There are also two letters held in the Gilbert Murray papers at Oxford's Bodleian library, copies of which exist within the Munster archive held at NSW's Mitchell Library. In the first, a *handwritten letter* dated 16 March 1917, Childe seeks Professor Murray's advice on whether there might be a suitable position for him in the US.¹³² Murray had apparently just returned from there. Childe explains that he will soon complete his studies and will be in need of an income. Given the 'senseless prolongation' of the war, he does not anticipate being able to undertake scholarly research into prehistoric ceramics in Europe or Greece as advised by Professor Burrows, in the foreseeable future. The letter has a typewritten note at its bottom, presumably by Murray, that Childe should be invited to lunch imminently. Interestingly, Childe has misspelt 'archeologist' (sic). Perhaps there was a temporary trend to do this in Britain's 1910s. A similar misspelling – 'archologist' (sic) – occurs on the later, typed (British) passport renewal application of 5 July 1917.

In the second *handwritten letter*, dated 22 March 1917, Childe declines the lunch invitation, as he is on holiday. He includes some vocabulary in the Greek alphabet. It would be interesting to have the insights of a handwriting expert on these letters; to an untrained eye, they seem stylistically different.

The US finally agreed to enter the war on 6 April 1917, presumably prompting Childe to recalculate his career options. Britain and its allies had hoped that the addition of US forces would help them to secure victory. This, however, was not to happen until the end of 1918. In between, Britain's Entente partner, Russia, would withdraw from the war, freeing German troops to be deployed to other battlefields, thus intensifying Britain's fears of defeat.

¹³¹ Jane Doulman and David Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: A History of the Australian Passport* (Federation Press, 2008), 49-55.

¹³² See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Trinity 1917 – April to June

On 5 May 1917, Australia had its first federal election since the double dissolution election of 1914.¹³³ Hughes' breakaway National Labor Party joined with the Commonwealth Liberal Party, forming the Nationalist Party. In another surprising outcome, the new party had a landslide victory. This would encourage confidence in some quarters that conscription could be introduced in Australia after all, however, it would again be defeated in a vote some months later.

During this period there seems also to have been a bizarre – even implausible – sequence of events that came to light when Childe's MI5 file, KV2/2148, was partially declassified in 2006.¹³⁴ The file includes a transcript of a letter sent by Childe, requesting permission to visit PT Davies in Dorchester Prison. Childe states that he needs to visit the former Queen's student prior to June 5, as he – Childe – will be occupied thereafter with university tasks, before returning to Australia. He further refers – possibly untruthfully – to “your letter to my friend the pro-provost of Queen's dated 18/10/16 that the prison Commissioners are prepared to consider such applications”.¹³⁵ Champion associates this request with a letter written by Childe to Professor Murray on 12 October 1916, asking Murray to communicate with the Prison Commissioners.¹³⁶ Notably, Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek, was never the pro-provost of Queen's College.

Whatever the details of that sequence of events, Childe visited Davies in Dorchester Prison on 1 June 1917. The next file entry is a transcript of a chain of subsequent correspondence. A warden reported, in writing, on 1 June 1917, the conversation that he thought he overheard between Childe and Davies. Besides including a misleading reference to New Zealand, it seemed to purport that Childe, unlike Davies, supported attempts by German

¹³³ https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/election-dates.htm

¹³⁴ Michael David Lever, “A Person of Interest: Gordon Childe and MI5” *Buried History: The Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology* 51 (2015): 23.

¹³⁵ National Archives File KV2/2148, transcript of letter from Childe to Secretary, Prison Commissioners, 13 May 1917.

¹³⁶ Champion, “Childe and Oxford”, 27.

submarines to sink enemy vessels.¹³⁷ The report prompted a cycle of correspondence between the Home Office and the Queen's College pro-provost, the eminent historian, Edward Armstrong, assessing the risk that Childe presented. The pro-provost stated that Childe was of good background – his father was the Reverend of Sydney (retired) and his maternal uncle, a judge –and that Childe had arrived as a brilliant student with “normal” views. Further, he had done worthy archeological [sic] research. He went on to say that Childe had become besotted with Davies, gratuitously adding that Childe was “repulsively ugly, probably the ugliest man in the world”.¹³⁸ This would seem unexpected language for an eminent historian. He finished with the wish that Childe should return to Australia.

Meanwhile, Childe passed ‘the Greats’ in June 1917 with first class honours.¹³⁹

1917 – July to August

Having decided to return to Australia, Childe made the necessary arrangements. His MI5 file, KV2/2148, includes a copy of his passport renewal form, dated 5 July 1917, in preparation (presumably) for the Australian return. Notably, his paternal uncle, Canon Childe, was his referee and contact address. After triggering another cycle of correspondence with MI5, the application was approved on 12 July. Its recommendation was that he go via the “long sea route” and “not via America”.¹⁴⁰ Two weeks later on 26 July, the passport office reported that the endorsement was completed. As the Orient Line ships had been requisitioned for war services, Childe would be travelling on a New Zealand vessel, the *SS Rimutaka*. Curiously, the passport clerk seemed to think that it went via the Panama Canal which had been opened in August 1914. Its Captain replied on 13 August that the ship did not take this route to New Zealand.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ National Archives File KV2/2148, transcript of letter from CE Tolley, warder, to unknown recipient, 1 June 1917.

¹³⁸ National Archives File KV2/2148, transcript of letter from E Armstrong to SW Harris, 17 June 1917.

¹³⁹ *Oxford University Gazette*, 11 July 1917, 590.

¹⁴⁰ National Archives File KV2/2148, passport renewal application dated 5 July 1917 with annotation dated 12 July 1917.

¹⁴¹ National Archives File KV2/2148, handwritten Passport Office Memorandum 200968 See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Most likely towards the end of July, Childe wrote a letter to his University of Sydney co-student, RG Watt, at the request of HD Hall, their mutual Sydney friend.¹⁴² Hall had arrived at Oxford in September 1915, a year later than originally planned. By chance, all three, although drawn to socialist policies, had fathers who were Non-Conformist clergy; Watt's was a strict Congregationalist, Hall's was a Wesleyan and Childe's was an Anglo-Catholic.¹⁴³ After the war, Hall and Watt would go on to be involved – in different ways – with the development of the League of Nations. Childe began by stating that Hall had asked him to describe the “true position with regard to the war”.¹⁴⁴ He argued the importance of **objective** Truth and then provided a description consonant with the UDC interpretation, asserting that Britain was resisting a negotiated settlement. Using statistics and references, Childe further contended that Britain's actions had been motivated by plans of a long-term division of spoils. This, he posited, had come at the cost of an extraordinary curtailment of civil liberties. Most surprisingly, he described Professor Evans as a “jingo and pan-Slavist” and stated that back in February 1916, Evans had claimed that Italy would be the recipient of Dalmatian lands. This implied that, if Britain won, Italy would be rewarded for its assistance.¹⁴⁵ This unflattering characterisation of a professor who was exceedingly well-connected seems an unusually forthright – and professionally dangerous – statement for Childe to have made.

A further curiosity with Childe's letter to Watt, is its intended method of passage. Even though he was expecting to leave Britain imminently, Childe hoped the letter would arrive in Sydney before he did.¹⁴⁶ It is unclear whether it was to be posted, and therefore subject to the censorship protocols both in Britain and in Australia, or whether it might have been entrusted to a friend or relative travelling (back) to Australia. If posted, the letter would

¹⁴² Terry Irving, “Selection of Vere Gordon Childe's private letters,” in *Childe and Australia : archaeology, politics and ideas*, ed. Peter Gathercole, Terry Irving and Gregory Melleuish (University of Queensland Press, 1995), 28-32; Irving, *Fatal lure*, 70-74.

¹⁴³ Nicholas Brown, “Enacting the international: RG Watt and the League of Nations Union,” *Transnational Ties* (2008): 77; Fletcher, “Hessell Duncan Hall”.

¹⁴⁴ Irving, “Selection of letters”, 28-32.

¹⁴⁵ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹⁴⁶ Irving, “Selection of letters”, 28. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

likely be reviewed by the NSW Censors, some of whom were associates from the University of Sydney. Notably, the letter's structure, statistics and references suggest that it was intended to withstand critical scrutiny.¹⁴⁷ It seems possible that Childe, and perhaps Hall, hoped that Watt might share it with appropriate people in Sydney. For example, Childe, Watt and Evatt had done the Philosophy I subject together in 1912, so perhaps Watt might have shared the letter with Evatt, or Professor Anderson. Unfortunately, there is no definitive evidence beyond it being in the RG Watt archive.¹⁴⁸

When Childe left Britain on New Zealand's SS *Rimutaka* on 12 August 1917, there was no end in sight for the gruelling, meat grinder of a war. Three years in, it might last at least as long again. This was a frightening prospect. Yet, to survive, people had to dissociate from the horror and just get on with things. Reflection was a luxury that few could afford.

¹⁴⁷ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 72-73.

¹⁴⁸ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Chapter 7

Misinformation, disinformation and the unknowns

The landmass of Australia is more than thirty times the size of Britain. In the early twentieth century, while Britain had a population of more than 40 million people, Australia had less than five million people, of whom only around one and half million lived in New South Wales. Of those, barely 40% lived in Sydney and its suburbs – that is, around 750,000 people.¹ Thus, the entire early population of Sydney was only five times today's population of Oxford, Britain.

Vere Gordon Childe was born into Sydney's upper middle class, but it was a very particular social niche that was specific to its time, its place and its numbers. Undoubtedly it had its moments of parochialism but it was also a milieu of unusual social mobility, cosmopolitan aspirations, and maverick optimism. It was also a place of paradoxes. Imperial loyalty contrasted with antipodean independence. Policies for social justice and safety nets for the disadvantaged coincided with widespread abuse of the land's original inhabitants. Pioneering chutzpah coexisted with xenophobia and the White Australia Policy.

In spite of the various contradictions that existed across Childe's social milieu, he had more access to opportunity than most. He could reasonably aspire – intellectually, financially and culturally – to achieve a great deal. At present, we know little about his earliest years but after he started at the University of Sydney, he began to develop enduring friendships with other 'brilliant young men'. As students, they spurred each other on, challenging themselves and each other. They were encouraged by engaging teaching staff, some of whom were inspirational polymaths with diverse curiosities and skillsets. Childe, like several of his contemporaries, would receive a postgraduate scholarship to study at the University of Oxford. As a Classics scholar, Childe likely had at least one introduction to Classics specialists in Oxford. Thus, in spite of the

¹ Trivett, *Year Book 1916*, 439, 444.

rumbling growl of geopolitical tensions, his prospects for the future probably seemed exciting indeed.

Unfortunately, war was declared.

Previously unidentified considerations

To the best of my knowledge, the Childe research corpus has not previously identified that Childe left Sydney with a close friend from university, the 1914 NSW Rhodes Scholar, HA Henry. Although Henry planned a career in Law, he, like Childe, had a background in Latin and Greek. They had taken multiple subjects together in small classes during the previous years and in the final year at the university, they had also jointly participated in various student association roles. Given the unique events of August 1914, it seems likely that the long, unusually dangerous ocean voyage to Britain would have been memorable for them. Frustratingly, we have sparse information about this trip. This warrants further enquiry, to ascertain whether it is just a quirk of preservation or whether some degree of intentional misdirection is involved.

If it were the only ambiguity, it would probably be inconsequential for a better understanding of Childe's later professional circumstances and choices. However, careful scrutiny suggests that there might be a more complicated pattern of uncertainties. We now know that Classics and Archaeology experts were valued in successive armed conflicts of the early twentieth century, for both their local knowledge and their problem-solving skills.² We also now know that some of Childe's professors, both from Sydney and Oxford, would later be involved with Intelligence work, either in the Mediterranean, or with censorship authorities. This raises the possibility that either Henry or Childe or both would have some involvement with war-related Intelligence activities at some stage. Henry's self-declared record does seem to confirm his own later involvement, as an officer and combatant in Dunsterforce,

² Burman, "Classics at Bletchley", 66.

operating out of Persia.³ Childe, meanwhile, was famously rejected in his early attempt to enlist for active duty.

Childe's later commitment to freedom of conscience and the preservation of civil liberties is undeniable, yet the blurred details of the early war years suggest that his beliefs may have changed over time. If so, this could indicate that the change resulted from information and insights that were not generally available to unenlisted, expatriate students. One possibility is that his research trip to Greece in March and April 1915 – also not previously clarified – may have catalysed a sequence of events that would lead to Childe later having less faith in the leadership and wisdom of Britain's politicians and generals. His research trip was apparently made with the sponsorship of Oxford dons Myres and Hogarth, both of whom had Intelligence connections in the eastern Mediterranean. When describing Childe in June 1917, Queen's pro-provost, Sir Edward Armstrong, was to note Childe's exceptional ability as an archaeological researcher. Interestingly, he also stated that Childe continued with the Civilians' Battalion until a "romantic affection for P. T. Davies"⁴, but it is unclear when this alleged affection commenced. Davies, a fellow Queen's student, was arrested in 1916 after his claim for exemption from conscription was rejected. Again, the uncertainties around timing and motivations suggest that further enquiry may provide useful insights.

Childe's membership as a Student Associate – one of only three – of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies from early 1916 is also notable, suggesting a special regard for his talents. Given that it was a time of national emergency and that the Society's primary office holders held prominent roles in Britain's institutions, it further implies that Childe was considered to be trustworthy and discreet.⁵ Interestingly, this

³ <https://archives-search.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/35681?keywords=Henry%2C+Harry&highlights=WyJoZW5yeSwilCJoYXJyeSjd&lsk=fc0fcf4095cfa1114c59b9c902926264>

⁴ National Archives File KV2/2148, transcript of letter from E Armstrong to SW Harris, 17 June 1917.

⁵ Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies 1915-1916 – Student Associates, xxxvii, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-hellenic-studies/article/proceedings-of-the-society-19151916/233B68C4ED8426883191E7354E7DD929>.

membership continued until he left Britain in 1917. Again, it should be remembered that by contemporary standards, the views of some individuals of the period could be considered internally inconsistent. For example, Oxford emeritus Professor Sayce described himself as a Tory who supported women's suffrage, while prominent socialist, Beatrice Webb opposed it.⁶ This reminds us to be wary of our own assumptions regarding individuals' positions on specific issues at a specific point in time.

The central research question of this thesis has been, 'given Childe's background and the scholarly expectations for his future, how did he respond and adapt to the Great War?' Although many uncertainties remain, it has become abundantly clear that this was a pivotal period in his life, contrary to most previous scholarship that merely excludes it. A significant – and still baffling – eventual outcome was that a decade later, Childe would be awarded a precious, senior, tenured job, ahead of other apparently worthy candidates. His ongoing intellectual contributions to both the academy and the broader public would justify the trust of his selectors, yet only several years earlier, few could have predicted it.

Contextualising Marxism and socialism in the early twentieth century

Some scholars may question that Childe has not specifically been described as a Marxist in this thesis, given that it has been possibly the most popular adjective applied to him during the last fifty years. This thesis has examined aspects of Childe's life up to 1917, the third year of the Great War; thus, the expression had little relevance in that period. At that time, the world did not have any Marxist states. Earlier in 1917, the Russian monarchy had been overthrown by protesters who, later in the year, would themselves be overthrown by a Marxist movement, the Bolsheviks, in the second Russian revolution.

Childe himself would later posit in 'Retrospect', written in the last year of his life, that he began to apply Marxist principles to his archaeological theory around the mid-

⁶ Sayce, *Reminiscences*, 475; Webb, Webb and Austin, *Australian diary, 1898*, 73-74.

1930s.⁷ This would imply that in his own mind, he did not do this prior to that time. Childe was probably introduced to elements of Marxism while at the University of Sydney and it was certainly a part of his intellectual milieu while at Oxford from 1914 to 1917. His close friendships there included Rajani Palme Dutt and Raymond Postgate, both of whom would later be involved with the formation of a Communist Party in Britain in the 1920s. Hence, it seems possible that elements of their intellectual jousting may have influenced Childe's thinking prior to the mid-1930s.

Marxist theory would, however, have been a topic of lively discourse during his stay in Australia from late 1917 to 1921, a period beyond the scope of this thesis. During that time, Childe was actively involved with the WEA, as both member and teacher. In 1921, his colleague, GV Portus published *Marx and Modern Thought*, intended as an accessible text for WEA classes. Portus stated that by 1914, Marxism was considered a 'spent force, no longer relevant', however, after 1917, it could not be ignored.⁸ Yet more cross-fertilisation may have arisen from Childe's employment as Research Officer and economic policy development for the (left wing) NSW government during 1921.⁹ Importantly, in the early twentieth century, economic theory was more likely to interrogate sustenance and survival issues, rather than its modern focus around wealth production and distribution. Notably, Childe's subsequent archaeological theorising of diffusion and the Neolithic and Urban revolutions was underpinned by economic considerations.

Invisible colleges¹⁰

Although he was later to denounce institutional religion, Childe's Protestant upbringing seems to have been a key factor in both his early friendships at the University of Sydney and his attraction to humanist philosophy. His father had been a Reverend and Rural Dean, advocating a heterodox strand of Christian interpretation

⁷ Childe, "Retrospect," 71-72.

⁸ Garnet Vere Portus, *Marx and Modern Thought* (No. 4. Workers' Educational Association of NSW, 1921), 119.

⁹ Irving, *Fatal lure*, 129, 171-180.

¹⁰ Díaz-Andreu, "The invisible college", 40-41.

that sought to unite Anglican and Catholic doctrines. Several of Childe's university friends also had fathers who were, in the lingo of the period, Non-Conformist clergy. This was the term for non-Anglican Protestants. Further, some of his early friends, in particular, HV Evatt, were actively involved in the University's Christian Union. This amalgam of interests and enquiry drew almost all of them into varying degrees of engagement with socialist ideas and politics because their Christian precepts encouraged humanist thinking and socialism-oriented policies. For Childe and Evatt, their interests in policy development and implementation would lead them into Australian Labor Party politics. Importantly, while each was to live a very different professional life, they remained close friends through the decades, thus giving each of them access to the other's world.¹¹

Evatt's expectations of being able to join his friends – Childe, HA Henry and HD Hall – at Oxford were ruined by the war. Although selected as NSW's 1915 Rhodes Scholar, he withdrew his application in November 1914 for unconfirmed reasons. Remaining in Sydney, he worked as Associate for Sir William Cullen, Chief Justice and Chancellor of the University. He also completed a Masters degree in February 1917. Its final chapter examines the Australian embrace of meritocracy and candour, in contrast with the tenets of British imperialism and a proposed 'Imperial Federation'. In particular, it charts the creation of Australia's Navy, unique among the dominions.¹²

Meanwhile, after finally arriving at Oxford in September 1915, HD Hall not only became involved with the socialist-oriented Fabian Society but was encouraged by prominent Fabian, George Bernard Shaw, to critically analyse the governance issues between the British Imperial centre and its dominions. His tome was completed in 1917 and published in 1920.¹³ Childe and Hall remained in contact at Oxford and in Evatt's 1924 PhD on further aspects of Empire/ Dominion relations, he referenced

¹¹ See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹² Herbert Vere Evatt, *Social and Political Tendencies in Australia* (Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Sydney, 1917), 84-110. See also Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

¹³ Hall, *British Commonwealth of Nations*, x.

Hall's publication. The entwinement of their lives that had started in 1912 continued to augment their scholarly output.

The disciplinary constraints of research questions

One unexpected outcome of this research into Childe's early life has been a deeper appreciation of the ways in which modern disciplinary boundaries can inadvertently obscure intellectual knowledge by encouraging self-censorship in our research questions. It is much easier when a research question falls conveniently *within* the boundaries of a current discipline – or, the *current* boundaries of a discipline.

Childe, Evatt and Hall all went on to have illustrious careers – but in different fields. Childe was known as an archaeologist based in Britain; Evatt, a jurist based in Australia; and Hall, an historian based in the US. Unlike life-writing or microhistory enquiries, conventional research questions often focus upon a subject's later professional achievements within a specified discipline. This can erroneously justify the perception that early influences and interactions are of scant relevance. In the case of Childe, Evatt and Hall, their shared matrix of wartime experiences is unlikely to be scrutinised by a researcher from a singular discipline yet it may yield meaningful insights about their later choices and commitments – it is an example of the 'invisible colleges' that Díaz-Andreu posits. Further, the salience of later social or political interactions may be overlooked because, unaware of the earlier social or cultural bonds, the disciplinary-specific researcher may miss the currents that intensify an apparently inconsequential exchange. Identifying early networks may also direct attention to illuminating documents otherwise missed.

In the decade from 1914 to 1924, both Evatt and Hall undertook major postgraduate research that interrogated the political complexities of imperial and dominion relationships. Both, naturally, examined this topic with Australian eyes. Even though a talented Classics scholar – with archaeological leanings – Childe likely developed an especially nuanced grasp of the history and legal intricacies of imperial and dominion relationships because this was the special topic of two of his close friends. Each applied deep, formal analysis to a topic that was integral to the dominion experience – balancing local sovereignty against the ties of shared economic interests. In

Australia's case, Responsible Government had led to Federation and then, eventually, to the birth of the Australian Navy, which triggered yet more gnarly debates around the issue of whether or not, in times of conflict, to relinquish command of defensive forces to the Imperial centre.¹⁴

To date, there has been little enquiry as to whether this extra-disciplinary competence can be discerned in any of Childe's later writings. As a thought experiment, one could view Childe's description of the confederation of the early Sumerian city-states as analogous with the Federation of Australia in 1901. His description of Sumer and Akkad is akin to Australia's pre-Federation colonies,

"The land is divided up ... among city States, each politically autonomous, but all enjoying a common material culture, a common religion, and a common language, and all largely interdependent economically."¹⁵

He goes on to describe how a mutual dependence upon imports provoked commercial tensions between the entities but that this was alleviated by the development of a more rational political unit.

"Babylonia made a political reality, a unified nation with a common capital, a common code of written law ... and a permanent system of government ... the city-state was absorbed into the territorial state that corresponded on the whole to the realities of economic needs."¹⁶

Australia's Federal tier of government could be viewed as a similar institution, remembering that the Australian states still retain control over matters deemed local, and commercial tensions re-emerge sporadically.

Conversely, there has been no enquiry as to whether Childe's experiences in Greece in 1915, or anti-war activism in 1916 and 1917, had any bearing on the future career choices of these particular friends. The hideousness of the Great War was to spark a passionate global desire to develop international bodies that could adjudicate

¹⁴ Jose, *Official History 1914-1918 Vol IX*, xxviii-xxx.

¹⁵ Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, 172.

¹⁶ Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, 175.

international issues. Hall went on to work with the Switzerland-based League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s, while in 1948, Evatt became President of its successor organisation, the United Nations. Both bodies laboured to create effective international arbitration processes – these were envisioned as a more humane and rational alternative to armed conflict. It could easily be argued that the ghastly scale of devastation provided motivation enough for their interest in alternate means of conflict resolution. It remains plausible, however, that the words and experiences of their friend, Childe, meaningfully fortified their convictions.

Other constraints can arise when a contemporary discipline has developed boundaries that did not exist at an earlier period. This is especially likely when a discipline has fissioned. ‘Childe research’, for example, is hampered by the split that developed, mostly in 1920s Britain, between the academic disciplines of archaeology and anthropology.¹⁷ Prior to that, the two fields of enquiry were seen as complementary facets of social exploration and even in later decades, the practitioners themselves opted for conceptual fluidity. Childe’s writings are steeped with considerations of sociality and in 1938, he was President of the Anthropology Section for the British Association for the Advancement of Science.¹⁸ There was not and never had been a separate Section for Archaeology. In contrast, the disciplines of Archaeology and Anthropology have been in separate Departments or Schools at the University of Sydney for decades.¹⁹ Consequently, the researcher must contend with academic boundaries that are recent and somewhat arbitrary.

Finally, Childe, like many of his intellectual peers, was a polymath. Although most intelligent people of his era would have generalist knowledge to nourish their creativity, the polymaths were those who had a more significant level of expertise

¹⁷ Biami, “Invention of prehistory”, 320, 328-329; David Shankland, “Introduction: Archaeology and anthropology: Divorce and partial reconciliation,” in *Archaeology and Anthropology*, ed. David Shankland. (Routledge, 2020), 2-4.

¹⁸ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, ix.

¹⁹ University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 1996* (The University of Sydney, 1996), 179, <https://archives-search.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/47743> viewed 24 May 2025; University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 2001* (The University of Sydney, 2001), 185, <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/1871> viewed 24 May 2025.

across multiple fields. In Childe's case, he started out as a Classicist with especial skills in philology and he supplemented these with ceramics expertise. He went on to teach Economics, tutor Logic, and undertake policy development research, before settling down to archaeological research, librarian duties and eventually, teaching. He was an idealist and activist, originally within the Protestant context and later, as an anti-war campaigner and supporter of leftwing political endeavours. He came from a well-connected Sydney family and visited Greece and Crete just before the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. In time, he would publish prolifically, composing archaeological narratives that were meaningful, original and scintillating. His oeuvre would be an unusual composite of life experiences, specific expertise and thoughtfulness.

Research questions that focus upon polymaths are especially challenging on two quite different fronts. First, the polymath's achievements in one discipline are often interwoven with their other knowledge domains. Ideally, the researcher should engage intentionally with these elements, rather than confining their purview to the specifically disciplinary items. Yet, disciplinary conventions may discourage this. The second issue applies more generally to life-writing enquiries. When attempting to temporally and socio-politically contextualise a subject – person or topic – extensive extra-disciplinary information is also required. In the instance of Childe and the Great War, this has ranged from doctrinal understandings, to economic theory, to political theory, to geopolitical arrangements, to communications strategies. Yet, each topic has its own extensive academic literature and it is unrealistic to digest each entire corpus – the researcher needs to develop data management strategies, selection criteria, and humility. Besides the inevitability of someone being offended by a pithy summary, naive error is almost inescapable.

Conclusions: a thoughtful and principled chameleon

Almost seventy years after his death, V. Gordon Childe is still regarded as an important archaeological theorist. This thesis has applied the methodology and tools of life-writing to offer a more thorough and evidence-based understanding of his formative years, in the hope that this will provide a useful foundation for future queries. A further area of interest would be to explore the next decades of Childe's life, as these

remain surprisingly opaque, yet are likely to be pertinent to both his professional creativity and network. Bрами has insightfully probed some of Childe’s interaction with the diffusion debate of the 1920s and the developing schism between anthropology and archaeology.²⁰ However, it is likely that this topic warrants further investigation, with particular regard to the subsequent outcomes in Australian universities. As for the disciplinary structures themselves, additional inquiries could further explore how academic specialisation – and the invention of new technologies – shapes research questions in the Social Sciences. A corollary might involve developing strategies for assessing the veracity and rigour of cross-disciplinary analyses, especially those including an archaeological dimension.

In 1936, Childe wrote the enormously popular, *Man Makes Himself*. It sketches the temporal and geographical extent of human societies, noting their fundamentally *social* qualities, regardless of the simplicity or sophistication of their material culture.²¹ Importantly, he wrote it amid the horrifying possibility that Europe was about to be sucked into yet another devastating conflict, barely a generation after the Great War. In a chapter called ‘Timescales’, Childe lists the memorable innovations of the early twentieth century.

“We shall recall the first flying-machines, the multiplication of motor-cars, the beginnings of wireless communication with ocean liners, suffragettes, a world war, the Russian revolution, a general strike, and so on.”²²

It is reasonable to assume that he included these examples intentionally. Understandably, flying machines, motor cars, suffragettes, world war and Russian revolution are deemed significant. However, “... wireless communication with ocean liners” at first seems odd. From the perspective of a scholarly archaeologist, it seems a rather less momentous innovation than the others – unless he had good reason to have especially acknowledged that technology. Prestigious British ocean liners like *RMS Orsova* had had wireless communications installed shortly before the declaration

²⁰ Bрами, “Invention of Prehistory”.

²¹ Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, 51-52.

²² Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, 43.

of war in 1914. By chance – perhaps – Childe was among the earliest passengers to travel on an international liner with it. This leads me to speculate that the tenor of the times – 1936 – was triggering memories for him, of the beginnings of the last war and his experiences then.

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Appendix 1 – Organization of Appendices

One week prior to the final date for submitting this thesis, a miscommunication around word limits revealed itself. Consequently, this thesis required radical surgery at short notice. Several strategies have been applied:

- The **Conclusions** sections of chapters 2 through 6 have been relocated to clearly labelled appendices.

For example, Appendix 2 has the Chapter 2 Summary. This is the chapter's Conclusions – 'Equity, social justice and self-reliance'. The logic is that the Conclusions summarise the evidence and argument of the chapter and are, therefore, a form of duplication. However, they usefully distil that content.

- **Selected sections** of content have also been relocated to appendices 7 and 8 as their presence in the main body is not essential to the thesis' primary arguments.

Nevertheless, they include interesting dimensions of research that came within the (funded) ambit of the research project and may be of assistance to future researchers.

- The **extensive referencing** has been distilled so that only the essential direct sourcing has been included in the main text.

The original referencing included elements that were complementary to the body of this thesis and may be of value to future researchers. These have been shifted to Appendix 9 – Additional Notes.

Appendix 2 – Chapter 2 Summary

Conclusions: equity, social justice and self-reliance

For many Australians – the white ones – the early twentieth century was a pretty wonderful time. After being granted Responsible Government in the nineteenth century, the antipodean colonies continued along the course to Federation but given that there was no ‘old world’ aristocracy in Australia, the institutions of the new country were (partly) unshackled from the Imperial conventions. Thus, federal legislation required approval from elected representatives, rather than the hereditary ones of the Westminster system. The mostly Protestant population also valued self-reliance and a strong work ethic. Literacy, libraries and the widening ripples of suffrage led to unexpected political participation, resulting in legislative innovation. By Federation, elected representatives could come from almost any background, reinforcing the ethos of effort and merit-based reward. It was a frothy mix, so original that it attracted international attention. Yet, it was also obvious that some people experienced miserable – and often unfair – outcomes in life. This stimulated other debates around social justice, including whether or not it should be a collective responsibility, via government, to provide for the most disadvantaged.¹ Such aspirations could be characterised as liberal, socialist, or virtuous. Finally, the isolation of the landmass emphasised the need for a defence capacity. (The results for an undefended continent were obvious). The young V. Gordon Childe was born of this vibrant yet principled antipodean tapestry. Its Australian attitudes and issues were the substrate, not only of his early life, but also his future convictions. On this substrate would be overlaid the strata of family beliefs and connections, scholarly training and a social conscience.

¹ Childe, *How labour governs*, xiv . See also Appendix 9 - Additional Notes.

Appendix 3 – Chapter 3 Summary

Conclusions: a heritage of social responsibility

On both sides of Childe's family, there was a tradition of service – to the Law, the Anglican Church and the community. Various family members held positions of responsibility and were trusted to keep other peoples' secrets. Gossip was not their métier. Childe's grandparents, both paternal and maternal, appear to have had a background of evangelism, although their interpretations of it may have differed. Equally indeterminate is the degree to which Childe's parents and maternal uncle embraced the effervescent energy and socio-political innovation of a federated Australia. This was an environment of unusual social mobility in which those holding positions of responsibility often held progressive views. We have only a threadbare understanding of Childe's relationships with his older half-siblings and his younger cousins. The suggestion that Childe had few familial interactions in Britain similarly warrants scepticism. The connections are more likely to have been extended and intertwined.

Of less dispute, however, is that this intelligent little boy was born into an era in which the dogmas of cultural certitude were being challenged by one discovery after another. New tools and techniques were overtaking the questions of an earlier natural philosophy, revealing unexpected discoveries and fresh ways of thinking about the human past. Childe grew up to be fascinated by ancient languages and the stories that could be discerned from dusty, broken fragments.

Appendix 4 – Chapter 4 Summary

Conclusions: personal connections, international bonds

In 1911, the University of Sydney was another of those antipodean ipseities – a tertiary institution that prided itself on exemplary academic standards, yet with a broader, more inclusive student base. Childe flourished in this environment. Although he seems to have had a solitary childhood, he began to enjoy a network of friendships that would nourish intellectual exploration, effort, and community engagement. Most of his subjects had small class sizes, encouraging students to challenge each other and their teachers, week after week, term after term. During his first year, his main classmates were HA Henry, JR Neild, RG Watt and FE Pulsford; the following year, they would all be energised by the slightly younger and brilliant HV Evatt. The precise details remain uncertain, but over the next two years, most, along with HD Hall, became involved with an articulated vision for social justice and egalitarian access to knowledge. Unexpectedly, the Mens' Christian Union seems to have been a pivotal meeting point, catalysing future involvement with the popular socialist and Australian Labor politics of the era. It was an exhilarating time, in which the wondrous prospects for international scholarships jostled with the delicious anticipation of an extended international conference with many of Britain's top scientists in Australia. Yet simultaneously, international tensions were growing. In 1913, conscious of the then-extant German colonies to the north east of the island-continent, Australia took delivery of its own blue water Navy vessels. Paradoxically, this demonstrated the fusion of self-reliance with a colonialist sense of self-sacrifice to the British Imperial centre.

Appendix 5 – Chapter 5 Summary

Conclusions: intrigues, feints and evasions

Childe and Henry departed Sydney on RMS *Orsova* on 1 August 1914. They probably shared a cabin. Notably, their scholarship adventures coincided with the world being sucked towards cataclysmic chaos. In those first days, Australia's newspapers were filled with accounts of legal seizure entitlements, the strength and scheduled movements of enemy shipping, as well as imminent censorship requirements. Australia was a maritime trading nation, an island-continent surrounded by oceans, with enemy colonies to its north east. Yet any sense of threat was balanced by a desire to aid Britain in its time of peril. Almost immediately, tens of thousands of young men started to enlist voluntarily for overseas service.

It is an interesting coincidence – not previously mentioned to the best of my knowledge – that Childe and his future supervisor, Professor JL Myres, were both in Australia when war was declared. Further, their respective vessels passed, literally ships in the night, within sight of each other off the coast of South Australia, at 11.15pm on Friday, 7 August 1914. In those days, the best of the Classics scholars were recruited for Intelligence work, although we have no clear evidence that this ever included Childe. Myres, however, would spend the later years of the war in Intelligence in the eastern Mediterranean.

After leaving the port of Fremantle in Western Australia, Childe and Henry would experience one of the first extended, blue water journeys of the newly-declared war – nine exposed days across the Indian Ocean. The exact whereabouts and strength of the dangerous German Indo-Pacific fleet was unknown. Before W/T technology, RMS *Orsova* would have been disconnected from any war news until reaching the next port, however, this was a new era for communications – and cryptography. Importantly, the many ambiguities, gaps in information, and previously unrecognised, unexpected coincidences of this unique journey would not be evident without applying a life-writing approach to the research question, 'given Childe's background and the scholarly expectations for his future, how did he respond and adapt to the Great War?'

Appendix 6 – Chapter 6 Summary

Conclusions: disillusioned by the ‘just’ war

When Childe and Henry arrived in Britain in September 1914, national sentiment strongly supported the war. The population was aghast at the atrocities committed across Belgium, persuading even traditional opponents of armed confrontation to change their minds. It had become a ‘just’ war, with little ethical ambiguity. Henry successfully enlisted but apparently Childe was rejected for active duty. The details of his Oxford course enrolments remain unclear but in spite of the war situation, he was – surprisingly – able to organise a research trip to then-neutral Greece and Crete in early 1915. BSA Director Wace informed Professor Evans that Childe had been introduced by Oxford dons Myres and Hogarth. Myres, Hogarth and Wace were all later associated with Intelligence work in the region. In November 1915, Childe’s first peer-reviewed archaeological article based on his research trip data was published. In December 1915, the University of Sydney’s Council approved an extra year’s stipend. In February 1916, Childe was admitted as a Student Associate for the London-based Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, giving him access to their Burlington House meeting rooms and Bloomsbury library. This sequence of events suggests that Childe was considered a trustworthy person amid the precarity of the times.

Yet, at an uncertain time in these years, Childe ceased to accept that this was a ‘just’ war, caused by German expansionism and brutality. We know that he joined the University branches of progressive, socialist groups during 1915, however, some of these groups – at that time – did not necessarily oppose the war. We now also know that in early 1915, he was near the sites of the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaigns. The casualties had begun before his arrival and escalated in the following months. Though personally insulated from this bloodshed, he was likely privy to information about what was going on. In time, his faith in the rationality and integrity of some leaders may have been shaken, especially once the scale of injuries and deaths became apparent.

In January 1916, the British government introduced conscription. Every man within its net – no longer just the volunteers – could be sent to the killing fields. Although only a tiny proportion of those eligible sought exemption, Childe became an energetic supporter of their right to conscience, arguing that it required courage to take an unpopular stand. The

views of the talented Classicist were no longer 'orthodox'. Concurrently, it was a year of intense political volatility in Australia. Federal political parties split and realigned, while voters were confronted by impassioned campaigns arguing for or against the introduction of conscription in Australia. The divisive referendum proposal was defeated in October 1916. Unexpectedly, its supporters were voted into government in May 1917, however, a second conscription referendum would also be defeated – by a greater margin – in December 1917. Childe was not overtly involved with archaeology in his final year at Oxford and completed his 'Literae Humaniores' coursework (an Oxford undergraduate degree) in mid-1917. Shortly before returning to Australia, he wrote a detailed letter to a Sydney-based friend, arguing Britain's culpability for the conflict and describing Professor Evans as a dangerous nationalist. He may have hoped that the letter would provide persuasive facts to those who were campaigning against conscription in Australia. In August 1917, about to journey again to the other side of the world, everything was uncertain. There was no way of knowing how much longer the awful carnage of the war would continue. Months? Years? How many more families would have to grieve their loved ones, or care for the crippled survivors? Examining this period from a life-writing perspective has helped us to better understand why matters of conscience forced Childe to risk his scholarly ambitions. The methodology has also helped identify puzzling lacunae that remain.

Appendix 7 – Diffusion

Knowledge transfer and adaptation

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most European peoples saw the world as different configurations of 'empire' and yet, assumed European dominance was laced with new and challenging insights into a different past. Burgeoning material evidence for earlier Oriental sophistication highlighted the relative barbarity of the contemporaneous European tribes. Linear concepts of evolution – and a distinctly European notion of progress – now grappled with traditional, metaphysical notions of an eternal, celestial revolution in which inevitable social decay would be followed by regeneration. Curiosity grew around how knowledge and beliefs might have passed from one locale to another and this led to questions around Who was doing it. Was the Who a race or a social grouping with shared customs, best described as a culture? Was there a difference between 'race' and 'culture'? And Who was at the receiving end? These seemingly common sense curiosities were to trigger surprisingly acrimonious debates for decades to come.

The umbrella term for the theory/ hypothesis is 'diffusion'. Notably, the intestines of the debate were to fundamentally change with the geopolitics of each decade – and the academic fashions. Perhaps most importantly, the diffusion debate can appear trivial – almost nonsensical – to those outside the disciplines.

In the nineteenth century era of relatively unobstructed travel from one Imperial region to another or between neighbouring nations or across the seas to other dominions, the idea of social intercourse was uncontroversial. Scholars could easily describe and experience examples of interaction over time, meaning that its occurrence was assumed rather than specifically delineated. Similarly, in the times of Prehistory, interaction between human groups – mobile and sedentary – made sense. However, the new archaeological and philological discoveries provoked fresh questions around when and how ideas and technical nous emerged. Did transmission *need* martial might and the requisite political heft, or could its spread be more subtle and consensual?

Although some scholars, notably Evans and Myres, were delighted that the archaeological finds on Crete validated a middle path that enabled both theoretical positions to be

somewhat true, that intellectual bridge was soon to be challenged from an unexpected direction. In 1911, Myres published his *Dawn of History*, a synthesis which focussed upon the interaction of societies with their geographical environs, while Petrie's synthesis explored the durations and material remains of (known) civilisations (Myres 1911:252). Both books were intended to be readable by non-specialist enthusiasts and both described Crete as an important link. Myres had also proposed a resolution for the paradox of Oriental stagnation by arguing that its civilised societies had become imprisoned by excessive subservience to ritual, neglecting its innovative outliers (Myres 1911:9).

At 1911's September BAAS meeting, an Australian-born, Cambridge-trained anatomist, Grafton Elliot Smith, delivered an idiosyncratic hypothesis with confidence and gusto, and this would eventually become known as the 'hyper-diffusion' theory (Champion 2003:129; Elliot Smith 1912:515). He followed the paper with publications in subsequent years, arguing that various embalming and construction techniques from multiple sites around the world were too fundamentally similar to be a coincidence and therefore all such cultural innovations must originally have spread from Egypt. Apparently, subsequent BAAS Meetings had some heated moments, particularly between Myres and Elliot Smith (Champion 2003:130).

Although hyper-diffusion as a theory was debunked relatively quickly and comprehensively, somehow the concepts of 'diffusion' and 'hyper-diffusion' got conflated in subsequent academic debates, leading some researchers in later decades to seemingly believe that diffusion *means* hyper-diffusion.¹ Further, some seemed to conclude, in the wake of the War, that diffusion could be equated with Imperialism and was, therefore, unacceptable in an era of nascent independence movements (Champion 2003:144). This would seem to rely on an assumption that any external knowledge was always imposed upon its recipient, rather than allowing for the recipient to have some agency, selecting and adapting ideas of their own choosing.² Thus, later proponents of diffusion have often been casually mocked,

¹ Renfrew 1969. According to Google Scholar in May 2025, this influential paper had been cited over 380 times, mostly prior to 2000. Interestingly, Renfrew not only misrepresents Childe's concept of diffusion but also claims Childe's 'trade' description as his own, ironically, while trying to assert the difference between the propositions. Various materials studies since, however, have increasingly vindicated Childe's theoretical propositions from last century. More recent ancient DNA (aDNA) insights are providing further supportive evidence.

² In other words, recipients are conquered rather than partnered.

as if they were actually positing hyper-diffusion, or perhaps advocating for an inherently exploitative imperial strategy. The net result is an attribution of belief that would be nonsensical to its purported source.³

³ Various Childe addresses later to try and dispel the nonsense, cf 1935 ('the diffusion controversy that raged here ten years ago' (p12)) and 1938 (shows that Montelius assumed diffusion). Champion also notes that early anthropologists, ie pre-anthro/ archaeo split, also assumed diffusion (141).

Appendix 8 – Malinowski

Section H advance arrivals – Malinowski and Witkiewicz

There is no *direct* evidence to indicate that Childe and Henry met thirty-year-old Dr Bronislaw Malinowski, who had arrived in Australia at an unclear date to undertake uncertain tasks for BAAS. In subsequent decades, however, Malinowski and Childe happened to be in the same place at the same time, and they shared interesting theoretical concordances.¹ Malinowski was originally from Poland, a country then dissected between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia. He had originally studied mathematics, physics and chemistry, before completing a PhD in philosophy, graduating in 1908 “from Cracow University with the highest honours in the Austrian Empire”.² He then moved to Leipzig for several years, studying psychology, economics and chemistry.³ With a growing interest in anthropology, he moved to Britain in 1910, to undertake postgraduate studies at the London School of Economics (LSE).⁴ In 1913, he published a work on Australian Aborigines, although he had not yet been here. In 1914, the BAAS’ Section H committee and its Secretary, RR Marett in particular, organised membership and a passage for BAAS’ 84th Meeting in Australia, where Malinowski would deliver a talk at the University of Sydney on Tuesday, 25 August, 1914.⁵

¹ Maxime N. Bami, “The invention of prehistory and the rediscovery of Europe: exploring the intellectual roots of Gordon Childe’s ‘Neolithic Revolution’ (1936),” *Journal of World Prehistory* 32, no. 4 (2019): 325-329.

² Helena Wayne, “Bronislaw Malinowski: The influence of various women on his life and works” *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 3 (1985): 531-532.

³ Gunter Senft, “Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski,” in *Culture and language use*, (John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 211. Wayne, the youngest daughter of Malinowski and his first wife, Australian journalist and photographer, Elsie Masson, states that, besides psychology and chemistry subjects, he took economics classes with Professor Bücher; Bami (“Invention of Prehistory”, 328) describes it as political economy. See also Firth’s thumbnail of Malinowski (Raymond Firth, “Introduction. Malinowski as Scientist and as Man,” in *Man and Culture: An Evaluation of the Work of Bronislaw Malinowski*, ed. Raymond Firth. (Routledge, 2006): 3).

⁴ It is not yet clear, when and by whom Malinowski was employed, and therefore, what precisely his requirements were.

⁵ Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 534-535.

Accounts suggest that the opportunity to visit Australia with the BAAS party was timely. It was roughly coincident with the emotional distress of a close Polish friend, SI Witkiewicz, whose fiancé had suicided in February, 1914.⁶ Witkiewicz was regarded as a brilliant but highly strung writer, and was accompanying his friend as a 'field photographer'.⁷

Malinowski hoped to provide a healing distraction for his friend, inviting him to share the journey to Australia. They left London earlier than most of the BAAS delegates.

Coincidentally, much of the journey was on RMS *Orsova*, which departed London on 5 June 1914, however, they did not join the ship until 11 June, in Toulon. Instead, they went to Paris first.⁸

It is also unclear how long they stayed aboard the RMS *Orsova*. Although a lesser known *Adelaide* weekly newspaper, *Critic*, included Malinowski and Witkiewicz in Adelaide's passenger arrival list for RMS *Orsova* of Sunday, 5 July 1914, other documentation suggests that the *Orsova* arrived there on Saturday, 11 July 1914.⁹ Adding to the turbidity, it was reported that Dame Melba – who also happened to be travelling on RMS *Orsova* – would disembark on 7 July in Fremantle and this seems consistent with later reports that she later visited Kalgoorlie.¹⁰ Frustratingly, there are also discrepancies about whether she joined the *Orsova* in London or Toulon. The later Adelaide arrival date is more consistent with Fremantle records but it is puzzling that a weekly paper would print that a ship had arrived when it was not due for another few days. Since Melba was included in the Adelaide *Critic's* arrival list, it implies that the list had been supplied by Orient Lines, and included the passengers for the *entire* London-Brisbane journey, regardless of *where*, and thus *when*, they disembarked. At this stage, the information cannot be cross-referenced with the

⁶ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz and Daniel C Gerould, *Mr. Price, or, Tropical madness : and, Metaphysics of a two-headed calf* (Routledge, New York, 2002), 2-3.

⁷ Bronislaw Malinowski, Elsie Masson and Helena Wayne, *The story of a marriage : the letters of Bronislaw Malinowski and Elsie Masson* (Routledge, London, 1995), xv.

⁸ Witkiewicz and Gerrould, *Tropical Madness*, 107.

⁹ *Critic*, 8 July 1914, 31 (col 3-4).

¹⁰ "Entertainments," *The West Australian*, 7 July 1914, 8. Dame Melba was a famous Australian opera star of the era; the Peach Melba dessert is named in her honour.

Adelaide Customs arrival sheets as a proportion – perhaps 50% – have not been preserved. Further inquiry is necessary.

Witkiewicz' account, drawn mostly from letters he wrote, outlines a different itinerary. Further, while the letters refer to the strains on their friendship, for the modern reader, the translated language makes it difficult to sift fact from imagination. In Witkiewicz' version, Malinowski and Witkiewicz left RMS *Orsova* in Colombo, Ceylon on 28 June and spent a couple of weeks touring the island until boarding RMS *Orontes* on 11 July, which was scheduled to arrive in Fremantle on 21 July.¹¹ After disembarking *Orontes* in Fremantle, they did more touring, including to Kalgoorlie (just over 600 kilometers due east). On 3 August, he wrote to his parents from Albany, a port roughly 415 kilometers south of Fremantle, that they have received the awful war news. Gerould then has them joining RMS *Orvieto* in Fremantle on 4 August, in part based on a letter written by Witkiewicz on *Orvieto* stationery, and dated 5 August. In a later letter, dated 10 August, he further describes that passage, making reference to RMS *Orsova* passing, prior to *Orvieto*'s docking in Adelaide.¹² Superficially, the RMS *Orvieto* passage would appear to be confirmed by its passenger arrival sheets into Adelaide on 8 August, 1914, as they list Malinowski and Witkiewicz – but – Malinowski is now described as being 55 years, instead of 30 years, and Witkiewicz is now 50 years, instead of 29 years. Equally surprisingly, Col. Legge, aged 50 years, is not on the arrival list, although his arrival seems sufficiently confirmed in multiple other sources.¹³

¹¹ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz and Daniel C Gerould, *The Witkiewicz Reader* (Northwestern University Press, 1992), 347.

¹² Witkiewicz and Gerould, *Witkiewicz Reader*, 91-93, 97. Yet another knotty thread – the recently published 'A trip to the dominions: a scientific event that changed Australia' (Lynette Russell, A trip to the Dominions: the scientific event that changed Australia Monash University Publishing, 2021), 12) makes reference to 'two Poles who spoke quite good Spanish' visiting the Western Australian, New Norcia mission with other BAAS delegates. Malinowski was a renowned polyglot (Senft, "Malinowski", 212).

¹³ <https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/987608>, BUT, slightly diff Adelaide arrival – July 5 – on RMS *Orsova*, *Critic (Adelaide, SA)*, 8 July 1914, 31. Adelaide arrival records are missing pages; https://archives.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documentstore/passengerlists/1914/GRG_41_34_0_557-1914_Orsova.pdf Or June 4th, <https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/987608>. Melbourne arrivals? Yet another oddity is that a letter, purportedly written on 2 July from Anurasdhnapura [sic], Ceylon, was in an envelope, apparently, printed with the address of an Adelaide Hotel (Witkiewicz and Gerould, *Witkiewicz Reader*, 91).

In spite of any ambiguities around the dates and itinerary of his arrival in Australia, from 8 August, 2014 Malinowski appears to have participated in the official BAAS program that commenced in Adelaide, then Melbourne, Sydney and for some delegates, Brisbane. After war was declared, as an Austro-Hungarian passport holder, Malinowski was – apparently – confronted with the choice of internment in Australia, or undertaking field work in New Guinea, but there are also different versions of *this* story. The other version is that he had always planned to go on to New Guinea from the BAAS Meeting. Perhaps a middle path is that he stayed rather longer than originally planned. Whatever his earlier intentions, he does not appear to have ever renewed his BAAS membership. After some degree of falling out, Malinowski's friend, Witkiewicz was able to return to Europe later in the year, where, to his family's surprise, he joined the Russian army and perked up.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Witkiewicz and Gerould 1992:102-106*. The letters include one sent from St Petersburg in October 1916, in which Witkiewicz asked Malinowski to track down some money that had been deposited by Witkiewicz's mother in a Sydney bank (p. 106).

Appendix 9 – Additional Notes*

*Entire, unedited note included for easier cross-checking

Chapter 1 – Tugging at the disciplinary veil

- 2 For a comprehensive listing of his 700+ publications, see Peter Gathercole, Terry Irving, and Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "A Childe bibliography: A hand-list of the works of Vere Gordon Childe," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 203-245. For assessments of their impact, see Andrew Sherratt, "V. Gordon Childe: archaeology and intellectual history" *Past & Present* 125 (1989); Andrew Sherratt, "Gordon Childe: Right or Wrong? (1995)," in *Economy and Society in Prehistoric Europe*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1997). Notably, most decades since the 1970s have brought renewed academic interest, including the international conferences in 1990, Brisbane (Gathercole, Peter, Terry Irving and Gregory Melleuish, eds., *Childe and Australia : archaeology, politics and ideas* (University of Queensland Press, 1995)) and 1992, London (Harris, David R, ed., *The archaeology of V. Gordon Childe: contemporary perspectives* (University of Chicago Press, 1994)). and the 2009 special issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology*.
- 3 V. Gordon Childe, *New light on the most ancient East*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 4th Ed 1952, reprinted by Routledge, 2014), 104, 123-147; V. Gordon Childe, *Man makes himself* (Watts and Co, 1936), 16, 74-117, 157-201; V. Gordon Childe, "Retrospect," *Antiquity* 32, no. 126 (1958): 71; Maxime N. Bami, "The invention of prehistory and the rediscovery of Europe: exploring the intellectual roots of Gordon Childe's 'Neolithic Revolution' (1936)," *Journal of World Prehistory* 32, no. 4 (2019): 311, 340; Kevin Greene, "V. Gordon Childe and the vocabulary of revolutionary change," *Antiquity* 73, no. 279 (1999): 97-99; William Joseph Peace, *The enigmatic career of Vere Gordon Childe: a peculiar and individual manifestation of the human spirit* (Columbia University, 1992), 122-123, 198, 266; Sherratt, "Childe: right or wrong", 503; Michael E Smith, "V. Gordon Childe and the Urban Revolution: a historical perspective on a revolution in urban studies," *Town Planning Review* 80, no. 1 (2009), 5; Bruce Trigger, *Gordon Childe, Revolutions in archaeology*, (Columbia University Press, 1980), 111.
- 4 V. Gordon Childe, *The dawn of European civilization*, (Routledge, Trench, Tubner, 1st Ed, 1925, reprinted by Routledge, 2008), 187, 198, 275; Childe, *Most ancient East*, 2. Greene states that the 'Revolution' analogy was first used in 1934 (Greene, "Revolutionary Change", 97-98), however, Peace traces its origins to slightly earlier texts (Peace, *Enigmatic Career*, 121, 123). Trigger states that the theories were crystallised in 1942 (Trigger, "Revolutions", 95).
- 6 Childe, *The Dawn*, 132-133. Especially after Childe's death, various scholars sought to strongly rebut diffusionism – see Colin Renfrew, "Trade and culture process in European prehistory," *Current Anthropology* 10, no. 2/3 (1969): 151, 153.
- 10 Timothy Champion, "Childe and Oxford," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 22; *Oxford Gazette* 1915-1916, Vol 46 :364; John Linton Myres, "Excavations in Cyprus, 1913," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 41 (1940): 53. Please note that Prof Myres' role as supervisor is based on secondary sources, specifically Green, *Prehistorian*, 14, Champion, "Childe and Oxford", 16 and Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "Internationalism in the invisible college: political ideologies and friendships in archaeology" *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7, no. 1 (2007): 94. It seems probable, given supporting circumstantial evidence. Green erroneously also states that Evans was co-supervisor. And if Myres was not a supervisor, then who?

- 23 Other possibilities might include Myres' former students such as OGS Crawford and Stanley Casson, both of whom saw active service in the Great War. See Stanley Casson, *Steady Drummer*, (G. Bell & Sons Limited, 1935), 118; Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford, *Man and his Past* (Oxford University Press, 1921), which he dedicated to Professor Myres; also Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford, *Said and Done: the autobiography of an archaeologist* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1955), 286. Casson and Crawford both became friends of Childe after the war.
- 33 James Turner, "Discipline Formation and Research Training: Chicken or Egg?" In *A Global History of Research Education: Disciplines, Institutions, and Nations, 1840–1950*. Edited by: Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang and Alan Rocke. *History of Universities XXXIV/1*. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 11-12, 14-15. Turner further observes that contemporary disciplinary practitioners within institutions tend to have limited cross-disciplinary interaction.
- 34 Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, "Interdisciplinarity in archaeology—a historical introduction." In *Interdisciplinarity and archaeology: scientific interactions in nineteenth-and twentieth-century archaeology*. (Oxbow Books 2021), 2-4. The definition of each of these terms tends to be fluid, so inconsistencies between disciplines are likely. In recent times, Australia's 2023 National Archaeology Student Conference has used 'intersectionality' to convey something along the lines of various arts and science disciplines coming together, whereas the term has a different meaning outside of archaeology. It was originally coined to describe the systematic, institutional oppression of Black women; it has since been co-opted by other fields. See Tripp 2023 and Bauer et al 2021.
- 38 Childe and Smith, *How Labour Governs*, v-x. Notably, most biographical statements are erroneous. In 1990, a conference was held in Queensland, aiming to address both the patchy detail of Childe's Australian origins, and his politics. This culminated in the 1995 publication, Gathercole, Irving and Melleuish, *Childe and Australia*. See in particular the editors' Introduction, xiii-xxi. For a general conference review, see Peter Beilharz, "The Vere Gordon Childe Centenary Conference," *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History* 60 (1991). Although many earlier biographical inaccuracies were corrected in this period, later writers from a political orientation, tend to use either these texts or Green, *Prehistorian*, further perpetuating the unevidenced assertions.
- 39 The most influential obituary has been Stuart Piggott, "Vere Gordon Childe," *Proceedings of the British Academy* vol. 44, (1958), but see also Robert J Braidwood, "Vere Gordon Childe, 1892-1957," *American Anthropologist* 60, no. 4 (1958) and Irving Rouse, "Vere Gordon Childe, 1892-1957," *American Antiquity* 24, no. 1 (1958). These were followed in April 1975 by the inaugural Gordon Childe Memorial Lecture at University College London (UCL), delivered by his literary executor, JGD Clark. Clark repeated some of the biographical errors of the political science scholars, concluding that Childe left Australia specifically to pursue an archaeological career whereas it was Childe's political research position that took him to Britain. It was only after that job was terminated that Childe reconsidered the lures of archaeology (Grahame Clark, "Prehistory since Childe," *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology*, 13, (1976): 1-2). Later published literature, in chronological order, includes Barbara McNairn, *Method and theory of V. Gordon Childe*, Annexe Thesis Digitisation Project 2016 Block 5 (1979); Trigger, *Revolutions* 1980; Green, *Prehistorian* 1981; Ruth Tringham, "V. Gordon Childe 25 years after: his relevance for the archaeology of the eighties," *Journal of field archaeology* 10, no. 1 (1983): 85-100; *Australian Archaeology* 30, no. 1, 1990, a special issue dedicated to Childe; Peace, *Enigmatic Career* 1992; Harris, *Archaeology of V Gordon Childe* 1994; *European Journal of Archaeology* 2009 (vol 12 (1-3), a special issue dedicated to Childe; Irving, *Fatal lure of politics* 2020.

- 46 Research papers published in the 2010s include Derricourt, "The making of a radical archaeologist", and "Changing Careers", Michael David Lever, "A Person of Interest: Gordon Childe and MI5" *Buried History: The Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology* 51 (2015), Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", and "Digitising 'Dawn'", Brami, "Invention of Prehistory", and Katie Meheux, "Gordon Childe and Broadcasting: Archaeology, Science, and Politics," *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 34 no. 1 (2024).
- 48 A Google Scholar search as at September, 2023 provides a loose indication. Using the terms, 'Gordon Childe archaeology theory' that Childe *didn't* author, yields 12,900 results; limiting the results to a posthumous date range yields 12,100; further limiting the results to Review Articles reduces the count to around 297.
- 52 For example, the Professor of Greek, WJ Woodhouse, was also the Honorary Curator of the University's archaeology-oriented Nicholson Museum; the Professor of Geology, Edgeworth David, was a Classics graduate from Oxford University and an internationally famous explorer of the Antarctica.
- 54 Green, *Prehistorian*, 11. Piggott states, "... his father was a man of strict and narrow views, who even when his son returned from Oxford would not allow him to smoke his pipe in the house" (Piggott, "Childe", 305).
- 55 Examples include Peace (*Enigmatic Career*, 78, 87) and Sherratt ("Childe: archaeology and intellectual history", 154). In earlier years, Allen had also used Piggott directly as a source ("Aspects of Childe", 52). By 1990, Green herself had moderated these views to, "It is tempting to assume that his son's later atheism, radical politics, and even his introverted personality, had their roots partly in reaction to his upbringing." (Sally Green, "V. Gordon Childe: A biographical sketch," *Australian Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (1990): 19). Trigger, while acknowledging Piggott's comments, had arrived at a different description (Trigger, *Revolutions*, 17-18).
- 59 Garnet Vere Portus, *Happy highways* (Melbourne University Press, 1953), 51, 70. GV Portus, the 1907 NSW Rhodes Scholar to Oxford, would later be employed by the University of Sydney from 1915 to 1933. He was primarily engaged to manage its Extension program which included WEA liaison. During the war, he was seconded to the censorship department for approximately three years. After returning to Australia, Childe would write to Portus in 1918, seeking WEA and Extension teaching employment. Subsequently, they would both teach at the WEA.
- 60 Derricourt, "The making of a radical archaeologist", 56; Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 14, 39, 41. Another key figure in this program was the much older student, Frank Pulsford, who apparently would go on to be deeply involved with the Red Cross during the War, visiting convalescing patients in an effort to trace those on the British War Office's Missing lists (John Broom, *Reported Missing in the Great War: 100 Years of Searching for the Truth* (Pen and Sword Military, 2020), 1-2). The Order of St John's Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau was originally established in Paris in late 1914 and its London office opened in April 1915. Pulsford and Childe may have reconnected in Britain and if so, Pulsford likely passed on casualty information normally blocked by the censorship regulations. The dates and locations of Pulsford's Red Cross services and currently ambiguous and warrant further inquiry.
- 66 JM Bennett, "Broadhurst, Edward (1810-1883)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1969, accessed online 6 August 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/broadhurst-edward-3057/text4503> . Curiously, both Cullen and Evatt were talented Mathematics scholars (JM Bennett, "Cullen, Sir William Portus (1855-1935)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography,

Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online 24 February 2022 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cullen-sir-william-portus-5838/text9919>).

- 68 GC Bolton, "Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894-1965)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 29 October 2021 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/evatt-herbert-vere-bert-10131/text17885>. On Childe's death, Evatt and Childe's cousin, Alexander Gordon, jointly organised Childe's funeral at the church in which he had grown up (Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 372). Notably, these enduring, personal connections would have given Childe an unusual insight into Australian political and legal developments over the years. This belies the claim that he had little connection or interest in Australian affairs throughout his professional life. Decades later, another valued friend of Childe and Evatt, Bill McKell, would go on to become the Governor-General, Sir William McKell. Childe had tutored McKell, originally a boilermaker, enabling him to commence studies for a Law degree (Christopher Cunneen, *William John McKell: boilermaker, premier, governor-general* (University NSW Press, 2000), 64-65; Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 89).
- 74 Almost 9,000 Australian volunteers died as a result of the campaign, from April 1915 to January 1916, <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/gallipoli/fatalities> See also Joan Beaumont, "'Unitedly we have fought': imperial loyalty and the Australian war effort," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 397-412.
- 75 Hundreds of thousands of British personnel were killed, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/ww1-war-dead-records.htm>
- 76 Simultaneously, there was a competing propaganda narrative to celebrate the courage and heroism of the fallen.
- 81 Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 85-87. By this time, Childe was specifically against State-endorsed participation in the Great War, but was probably also 'anti-war'.
- 85 University of Sydney Archives, Senate Minutes [G1/1], Minute Book 1913-1920, 14 June 1915, p. 209. Hall later submitted another request, and was approved for a single further term, rather than a year.

Chapter 2 – The language of concepts, aspirations and threats

- 3 Its colloquial name reveals that the land's original, dark-skinned inhabitants were deemed irrelevant to both its present and future.
- 4 Evatt used lower case for responsible government but Hall used title case. Almost all of Evatt's chapters have 'responsible government' in their title.
- 5 The Australian interpretation of the doctrine of responsible government has continued to evolve; in more recent decades, it is understood as relating to the responsibilities and accountabilities of Executive Government *within* the Australian context (Jacqueline Lipton, "Responsible government, representative democracy and the Senate: options for reform" *University of Queensland Law Journal* 19 (1996): 194). In contrast, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its interpretation related more to the relationship between self-governing dominion and Imperial centre.
- 6 Four of Australia's six colonies were granted Responsible Government in the 1850's but the six colonies did not federate until 1901 (Herbert Vere Evatt, *Liberalism in Australia : an historical*

- sketch of Australian politics down to the year 1915* (The Law Book Co. of Australasia Limited, 1918), 49).
- 11 Although all were inspired by Britain's Westminster system, that is, a second chamber of parliament to review the legislation proposed by the elected members of the first chamber, implementation varied.
- 12 The city's site was selected in 1908; it was officially founded and named in 1913 (NFSA). Interestingly, the Dominion's premier military college, Duntroon, was founded in the precinct in 1911, *before* construction of the future national capital commenced (NAA).
- 13 Various aspects, in particular, the industrial awards and dispute resolution mechanisms have, over time, become subject to Federal rather than State legislation and management. <https://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/house/pubs/practice/3rdpractice/chapter6.pdf>, p. 129.
- 20 In the later twentieth century, it was often a romanticised trope – think the iconic Che Guevara poster – and implied an outsider who was brave/ principled/ a martyr.
- 24 *The Official Year Book of New South Wales* for 1916, shows the trends of religious affiliation from 1891 to 1911 (JB Trivett, *The Official Year Book of New South Wales 1916*. (WA Gullick, Government Printer, 1917), 797-798). Interestingly, the table indicates that the proportion of people describing themselves as agnostic or atheists *dropped* over the twenty years from 1891 to 1911.
- 25 Trivett, *Year Book 1916*, 797. Approximately 1% of the NSW population described themselves as Jewish.
- 26 ¹ohn A. Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance: the essential contribution of Canon David John Garland," *Pacifica* 19, no. 1 (2006): 63-66. 'Anzac' has derived from the earlier acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corp (ANZAC). Moses also describes how the Great War was initially perceived by some Protestants as a 'Holy War' against 'Kultur' (Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance", 60).
- 29 Stiles, *Reading Ruskin*, 6. See also the data for primary and secondary education in *The Official Year Book of New South Wales* for 1916 (Trivett, *Year Book 1916*, 99-140).
- 30 When war was declared in 1914, there were 1,843 newspapers and periodicals being published in Australia (Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI – Australia During the War* (Angus & Robertson, 1937), 67).
- 34 Cunneen, *McKell*, 32. Childe (1892-1957), Evatt (1894-1965) and McKell (1891-1985) were contemporaries, but from significantly different backgrounds. Childe would leave later in 1914 for Oxford and he seems to have made contact with the WEA once there. His close Oxford friend, the English-born, Indian-Swedish R Palme Dutt was associated with the WEA in England, although it is unclear whether this was how they first met (Katie Meheux, "Eight socialist conscientious objectors at the University of Oxford, 1914–1918," *Oxoniensia* 82 (2017a): 168). Cunneen hypothesises that Childe and McKell first met *after* Childe's return to Australia (Cunneen, *McKell*, 55). He also posits that the WEA's 1914 tutors included GV Portus, however, Portus was in Adelaide in 1914 (Portus, *Happy Highways*, 156).
- 36 Hann describes the contemporary Euro-American concept of socialism to be collective ownership (Chris Hann, "Big Revolutions, Two Small Disciplines, and Socialism," in *Archaeology and Anthropology*, ed David Shankland (Routledge, 2020), 24). This contrasts with Cunneen's description of McKell's 1916 understanding that "socialism meant equal opportunity, not communal ownership of capital" (Cunneen, *McKell*, 42).

- 38 Childe's close friend at Oxford, Rajani Palme Dutt, was later to write in support of Indian independence (Dutt 1928).
- 39 There was a belief that a socialist revolution in Russia was 'impossible' because it was still feudal (John Horne, "Socialism, peace, and revolution, 1917–1918," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford University Press, 2014), 234-235).
- 40 The British Conservative Party which, among other things, supports the aristocracy, is colloquially known as 'Tory', while those who support more socially progressive policies, whether or not personally of the aristocracy, tend to be known as Whigs.
- 41 Childe's grandfather, Alexander Gordon, was a member of NSW's Legislative Council in the nineteenth century.
- 42 At that time, the indigenous population, immigrant women and those who did not own immovable property were unenfranchised.
- 43 This is a gross simplification. The new Constitution also included other features specific to the Senate, intended to provide accountability. First, each State has the same number of federal Senators, regardless of the State's population numbers. The intended purpose was to ensure that the needs of low population States were not marginalised. Second, a Senator's term is usually for six years and under normal electoral conditions, only half of the Senate seats are contested in each election. The intention was to have a more stable, representative body to scrutinise legislation.
- 44 Such questions were of particular saliency because, unlike Britain itself, Australia and most British colonies adopted a codified, 'single document' Constitution rather than relying on a body of precedents (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/explainers/what-uk-constitution>, viewed 6 January 2023.) Evatt's MA title was *Social and Political Tendencies in Australia*. His LLB title was *Certain Aspects of the Royal Prerogative: A Study in Constitutional Law*, and was published in 1936 as, *The King and His Dominion Governors: A Study of the Reserve Power*. Although Peter Beilharz, "The Young Evatt—Labor's New Liberal," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 39, no. 2 (1993): 168 note 3, stated that the MA was 'lost' as it is not in the University of Sydney Archives, I have since located a copy in the Evatt Collection, Flinders University Library. Beilharz also mentions Evatt using the line in his self promo, "Every man is the maker of his own career." This is reminiscent of Childe's *Man Makes Himself* (1936).
- 45 The Australian Labor Party (and various incarnations) ardently supported the White Australia policy for decades before it was jettisoned as a shameful notion. Beatrice Webb, of the Fabian movement, did not support female suffrage (Beatrice Webb, Sidney Webb, and Albert Gordon Austin, *The Webbs' Australian diary, 1898* (I. Pitman & Sons, 1965), 73-74).
- 46 Childe, *How labour governs*, 39, 50. Obviously the original users of specific words had no reason to explain how their usage was different to future, unforeseen, subverted applications of the same word. Later users often do not explain the historiography of words that they have co-opted.
- 47 Australia's Liberal Party was founded in 1944. Federally and in most states, it is in a coalition with the National Party.
- 48 The Australian academic year conventionally runs from March to November in a calendar year.
- 49 John Murphy, *Evatt: a life* (University of NSW, 2016), 36. In March 1915, Evatt's younger brother, Ray, successfully enlisted and apparently it was a family decision that Evatt should stay

- in Australia close to his widowed mother. His future study and scholarship plans changed accordingly.
- 50 As previously noted, almost all of Evatt's chapters have 'responsible government' in their title. The exception is 'Socialism Without Doctrines', which is a reference to the French language book by French Socialist, Albert Métin, who visited Australia in 1899.
- 51 Notably, Evatt did not include the broad suffrage that had existed earlier in Australia than in most other democracies.
- 53 This is commonly known as 'minority' government, where one party relies on the representatives of other parties, to build a majority of House votes on each piece of legislation. Minority governments have, to a greater or lesser extent, been relatively normal in various parts of the world through the last few centuries. They are less common in democracies with a Westminster base to their parliamentary practices. In those contexts, where the 'two party' system dominates, minority governments are often portrayed as inherently unstable.
- 55 In 1914, twenty year old HV Evatt was critical of the 'pledge' policy, however, he later became an elected Labor Party representative.
- 57 Childe, *How labour governs*, 31. The strategic intention of the policy is to ensure that debate on a particular plank occurs within a Party enclave, resulting in a 'block' vote in parliament. The intention is to prevent individual parliamentarians being 'picked off' in particular legislative contests.
- 58 Nick Dyrenfurth, "Labour and politics," *Labour history* 100 (2011a), 152. Australia was the first democracy in the world to elect a majority Labour government.
- 59 Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and villains*, 134-135. At the 1908 Labor Conference, Fisher is reported as saying, "No more sneers and scorn for Socialism! ... We are all Socialists now, and indeed the only qualification you hear from anybody is probably the he is "not an extreme Socialist"." (Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and villains*, 122).
- 61 Dyrenfurth, "Labour and politics", 108; Colin Nettelbeck, "French Awareness of Australia: The Role of Albert Métin (1871-1918)," *The French Australian Review* 64 (2018), 27-29, 32-34; Webb, Webb and Austin, *Diary 1898*, 113-115. The potential for this outcome had emerged just prior to Federation, inspiring research visits from the English 'power couple', Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who were already involved with Britain's progressive Fabian Society, and the French socialist, Albert Métin. Australia had been perceived by some international 'progressives' as an exciting foretaste, politically and economically, of a fairer future. (pun)
- 62 First draft legislation (1901) rejected; later promulgated as Defence Act 1903, then Defence Act 1904.
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ComParl#_Toc418157271 See also
https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/conscription/universal_service.
- 63 From 1905 on, there were growing concerns around Germany developing greater naval capacities. German colonies were also being established in New Guinea and various Pacific islands.
- 64 Childe, *How labour governs*,:xiv. Childe's 1923 book spells Labour with the 'u', however, contemporaneous newspapers omitted the 'u' when reporting Conference matters. Also, in recent decades, the ALP's annual federal Conference is referred to as the 'National Conference' rather than the earlier 'Inter-State Conference'.

- 65 “The Defence Question,” *The Advertiser*, 8 July 1908, p. 7. Home defence training was the eighth plank. Curiously, while Childe’s 1923 book describes, exhaustively, various issues from the early decades of party Conferences, the **only** reference to the 1908 Universal Service plank is its tabular mention on page xiv. Further, its subsequent implementation as government policy from 1911 was also deemed irrelevant to the text’s analysis.
- 66 https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/conscription/universal_service But *NSW Year Book 1916* calls it Universal Training, 81-83.
- 68 Of those who chose not to register from 1911 to 1915, 34,000 were prosecuted, with 7,000 receiving jail terms.
https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/conscription/universal_service, viewed 18 August 2022.
- 70 In contrast to the British situation, Australian voters had the opportunity, via a national referendum, to accept or reject the conscription proposals. To the present day, changes to the federal Constitution can only be made when a referendum is approved by a national majority of voters in the states and territories, *and* a majority of voters in a majority of the states.

Chapter 3 – Sydney, 1892 to 1910

- 4 Sally Green, *Prehistorian : a biography of V. Gordon Childe* (Moonraker Press, 1981), 4, 7, xviii. Alice (born 1871), Christopher (born 1873), Marion (May) Frances (born 1874), Laurence (born 1875) and Ethel (born 1876).
- 8 The article is written prior to the Federation of Australia in 1901, so each of the ‘states’ are viewed as separate colonies.
- 11 The press reports of the time invite inquiry, because they are inconsistent. All agree that the wedding took place on 22 November, but while the marriage notices in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 29 November and *Sydney Mail* of 4 December both state that the wedding occurred at the Holy Trinity church in East Melbourne (in the southern colony of Victoria, approximately 800 km away), the *Town and Country Journal* of 4 December states that the wedding took place at the Holy Trinity church in Sydney’s North Shore, and that it had “a large and fashionable attendance”. Inquiries thus far suggest that there was no Anglican Holy Trinity Church in the North Shore leading credence to the wedding occurring in Melbourne.
- 12 Confusingly, Childe had multiple generations of Alexander Gordons in his life; for reasons of clarity, hereafter they will be referred to as ‘grandfather Alexander Gordon’, ‘uncle Alexander Gordon’ and ‘cousin Alexander Gordon’. His grandfather and uncle had a background in the law and were admitted to the Bar as barristers. Uncle Gordon was also appointed as a judge in NSW’s Supreme Court.
- 13 KJ Cable, ‘Gordon Alexander (1815)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 16 October 2021, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gordon-alexande-3636/text5655> ; Green, *Prehistorian*, 5. Also, while Green states that Harriet’s siblings were born in Australia, Cable states that the Gordons emigrated to Australia in 1857, at least two years after sister Leonora’s birth. The motivation and intentions for this period are unknown; family, professional and/or the prospects of their children might all have been factors.

- 16 There were apparently two other sisters – Leonora, (1854-1929) and Adeline (1862-1939) who married an Eardley Lushington. Little further is known about these sisters.
- 27 Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 17. Coincidentally, the subdivision was an enterprise devised by three architect/ developers, Armstrong, Fletcher and Benjamin Backhouse, whose second son, Alfred, was later to become a judge, and Chancellor of the University of Sydney (KJ. Cable, 'Backhouse, Alfred Paxton (1851–1939)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1979, accessed online 22 February 2022 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/backhouse-alfred-paxton-44/text8489>)
- 30 Suez Canal opened 17 November 1869.
- 32 It would be useful to clarify what portions of construction costs were paid by the diocese and by the Childe/ Gordon family.
- 35 Derricourt, "The making of a radical archaeologist", 55; Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 37. Why 'Chalet Fontenelle'? By chance, there was an extraordinary natural scientist of that name born in Normandy in 1657; he lived until one month shy of his centenary, a feat for any era.
- 36 Dudman, *Jeaffreson Jackson*, 16. In the Anglican management structure, this position –in theory – is one that requires being elected by one's peers. It is intended to provide some local pastoral services, as well as being a conduit allowing the needs of isolated areas to be regularly conveyed to the Bishop. https://www.tonyhj.ca/Priest/glossary_of_titles.html; also <https://diolog.anglicands.org.au/intranet/documents/168/1969/Role%20of%20Area%20Deans.pdf>
- 39 Rutledge, "Gordon". The steamer trip to London from Sydney took roughly five weeks and from London to Sydney, roughly six weeks, depending upon the itinerary. International air travel began to evolve from the 1920s.
- 41 Childe was inconspicuous at the sports oriented school. He also does not seem to have engaged in any team oriented activities, or music classes.
- 43 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1910, p. 6. It is especially likely that Childe saw the story, because by chance, the retirement of the Shore Headmaster was reported in the adjacent column.
- 47 Robert H. Robins, "The life and work of Sir William Jones" *Transactions of the Philological Society* 85, no. 1 (1987): 1-3. In his 'Retrospect', Childe implies that his own interest in the Sanskrit-based *Vedas* began *prior* to commencing his Oxford studies (V. Gordon Childe, "Retrospect," *Antiquity* 32, no. 126 (1958): 69).
- 50 William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *The revolutions of civilisation* (Harper & Brothers, 1911), 5, 9-10. Professor JL Myres' *Dawn of History*, Henry Holt & Co, was published the same year. In later decades, Childe used the word, 'revolution' as a metaphor to describe a process of major social change including population increase, triggered by a technological/ communications innovation.
- 53 Notably, some later editions of *The Origin of Species* add, ': Or The Survival of the Fittest' to Chapter 4's original title, 'Natural Selection'. It would be interesting to know why this occurred.
- 54 The pseudo-logic has been applied to 'races', ethnicities and/or social characteristics.
- 55 Scaled trinities of cultural sophistication had previously been proposed; in 1776, for example, Adam Smith referred to the 'hunters, shepherds and agriculturalists of primitive society' (Raymond Firth, "The study of primitive economics," *Economica* 21 (1927): 315).

- 56 Powell, JW, "From Barbarism to Civilization." *American Anthropologist* 1, no. 2 (1888): 123. For example, JW Powell wrote extensively on Morgan's thesis. "In savagery, the beasts are gods; in barbarism, the gods are men; in civilization, men are **as gods**, knowing good from evil."
- 57 *Report of the Eighty-fourth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: Australia 1914* (John Murray, 1915), 515. After the Great War, many writers referred to the savagery and barbarism of so-called civilisation in the context of the war, but even by June 1915, some were applying that language to the main combatants. The Zimmerwald resolution, drafted in Switzerland by Trotsky states, "Millions of corpses cover the battlefields. Millions of men will remain mutilated for the rest of their days. Europe has become a gigantic slaughter-house for men. All the civilization created by the labour of previous generations is destined to be destroyed. Savage barbarism is today triumphing over everything that heretofore constituted the pride of humanity." (John Horne, "Socialism, peace, and revolution, 1917–1918," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford University Press, 2014), 229).
- 58 Raymond Firth, "The study of primitive economics," *Economica* 21 (1927): 315-318; 327-329 is a good example.
- 62 MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 109-112. Although Montelius (1899) is often credited with using cross-regional artefact traits to infer chronologies, especially in sites without textual confirmation, Evans appears to have referenced the technique slightly earlier. In September, 1893, Myres presented a paper on the Kamares Wares to the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 15 This was published in 1895. MacGillivray adds that Evans later published a paper sharing the credit with Myres; it was Evans' only jointly credited paper in a prolific career (MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 141).
- 63 MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 116-121. Contemporaneous texts use various spellings for Cnossos, Knosos, Gnossos, but rarely the modern anglicised form, 'Knossos'.
- 64 MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 132, 153-154. Evans' reasoning at that time for separate, early Cretan scripts was ill-founded; his original delineation was later rejected. The more useful delineation was 'Linear A' and 'Linear B'. Linear B turned out to be resistant to decipherment until the 1940s and as at early 2023, Linear A remains (possibly) undeciphered.

Chapter 4 – Sydney, 1911 to 1914

- 2 University of Sydney, *University of Sydney Calendar 1912* (Angus and Robertson, 1912), 326, <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1912/1912.pdf> Including the 'Evening Students', there were 82 students passed their First Year examinations, of whom 24 were female.
- 3 But the 1911 First Year Greek class included the fabulously named, 'Nineveh Butterworth'.
- 13 Nicholas Brown, "Enacting the international: RG Watt and the League of Nations Union," *Transnational Ties* (2008): 77. RG Watt's younger brother, Allan Watt, was to become NSW's 1921 Rhodes scholar at Oxford.
- 18 Note the distinction between brothers, Ernest A Gardner and Professor Percy Gardner.
- 19 Kaeppl 1937:79-80. Note that Woodhouse uses the French standard of the era – longitude is ex Paris and measurements are in metres and centimetres.
- 20 The Nicholson Museum Collections were absorbed into the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2020.

- 21 Frustratingly, while the regulations of the time state unambiguously that visitors to the Nicholson Museum must sign in, however, the extant, digitised Visitor Books suggest that this rule was only intermittently observed.
- 23 For Henry and Watt, this constituted a timetable clash with English I, but the University appears to have had arrangements in place to manage this relatively common clash. Tuesday and Thursday mornings were almost as busy for the 1911 Geology I students, since they had a two hour practical class starting at 11am, straight after the Mathematics I lecture. (*University of Sydney Calendar 1911*, 108.)
- 24 For example, Professor David participated in Shackleton's Antarctic expedition.
- 25 Similarly, it is unknown if Childe had any interaction with cousins on the paternal side of the family, or any correspondence between Childe's father and uncle.
- 26 Perhaps this prompted Childe to board with uncle Alexander Gordon?
- 28 JR Nield had similarly won scholarships to the University and St Andrews the previous year. He remained at St Andrews during Evatt's first year there.
- 29 *University of Sydney Calendar 1913*, 342-343. The Cooper Scholarship numbering is idiosyncratic. Cooper Scholarship I is awarded to a Philosophy II student, Cooper Scholarship II is for the best matriculating student, Cooper Scholarship III is awarded to a Philosophy I student and finally, there is the Cooper Graduate Scholarship. (*University of Sydney, University of Sydney Calendar 1914* (Angus and Robertson, 1914), 283 <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1914/1914.pdf>) It is notable that Evatt was also awarded multiple English Prizes and a Mathematics I prize at the end of his first year.
- 33 Professor of English, M. MacCallum held the two year term for Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1912, until succeeded by Professor Anderson in May, 1914. Interestingly, given that he published so prolifically and popularly in later life, Childe did not enrol for any English or History subjects at the University of Sydney.
- 36 *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 350-351; *University of Sydney Calendar 1914*, 355-356. The Philosophy II classes, focussing on Renaissance and Reformation thinkers and the relationships between politics and religion, appear to have been geared to the Evening students, taking place at 7pm Tuesday and Thursday, and 6pm on Wednesday.
- 37 These classes were scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at noon; *University of Sydney Calendar 1913*, 173-174.
- 40 https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/election-dates.htm; contemporaneous Australian rules stated that new voters had seven days after writs to join the electoral roll.
- 42 The remaining Committees were Evening, Electric Lighting and Decorations. Like Henry, Evatt would later be selected as the NSW Rhodes candidate, however, he withdrew his application before the official announcement. Thereafter, it passed to the only other candidate for that year. University of Sydney Archives, Rhodes Scholarship – NSW Selection Committee, S93, Item 1, Minute Book 1904-1939, 24 November 1914, 51-53.
- 54 Overlack, Peter, "German Assessments of British-Australian Relations, 1901-1914," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 50, no. 2 (2004): 196-197. He examines the German perspective of relations between Britain and its distant dominions.
- 55 DJ Murphy, "Fisher, Andrew (1862-1928)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online 22

October 2021 <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fisher-andrew-378/text10613> . In addition to being the first full-term Prime Minister from 1910-1913, Fisher had also led the preceding minority Labor government in 1909.

- 64 Notably, archaeology, at that time, was considered an area of expertise *within* the broader field of anthropology. Disciplinary separation arose sometime after the Great War, leading to different working methodologies. Differences included a preference for teamwork, as opposed to embedded individuals, and divergent attitudes towards subjective and objective observations (David Shankland, "Introduction: Archaeology and anthropology: Divorce and partial reconciliation," in *Archaeology and Anthropology*, ed. David Shankland. (Routledge, 2020), 2-4). Earlier archaeo-anthropologists, including Myres and Woodhouse, were very observant of local geographies. Myres maintained an involvement with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), and hypothesized a government-funded RAI Bureau. See RAI/ 1908.
- 66 This contribution was later increased to £15,000, plus arrangements were negotiated with each state's rail network, to transport the international delegates across the country.
- 68 The BAAS organisers had implemented a special policy whereby the residents of each of the dominion cities hosting events, could purchase a special 'temporary membership', costing £1, and thereby attend the public lectures in their city (Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 686). These temporary memberships generated a further £4,630 in revenue for the 1914 event (Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 712). Judge Alexander Gordon (uncle) and his Welsh-born wife had purchased these memberships (Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, List Of Members: Sydney).
- 69 There were three previous requests by an incumbent Prime Minister, 1901-1913, all refused (Evatt, Herbert Vere, "The Discretionary Authority of Dominion Governors," *Canadian Bar Review* 18 (1940): 2).

Chapter 5 – August 1914 – changes and concealments

- 1 "Homewards by the R.M.S. Orsova," *Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW)*, 1 August 1914, 17; University of Sydney, University of Sydney Calendar 1915 (*Angus and Robertson*, 1915), 334, <https://calendararchive.usyd.edu.au/Calendar/1915/1915.pdf>. Also Terry Irving, *The fatal lure of politics: the life and thought of Vere Gordon Childe* (Monash University Publishing, 2020), 45. Since 1910, the Orient line's Australian General Manager had donated these return fares to Britain, the company's home base, to be awarded at the discretion of the relevant University's Senate. They were valid for three years, during the off peak seasons and recipients could choose from the nine Orient ships that covered the Australia/ Britain via the Suez Canal/ Egypt route. For further information on the *Orsova*, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Orsova_\(1908\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Orsova_(1908)), although the passenger capacity figures should be checked.
- 2 Neither were booked on the same Orient Lines' voyage and in fact, Hall, a talented History and English student was compelled to postpone his passage to Oxford until the following year. Unexpectedly, he was married in Sydney on 1 August 1914. Under other circumstances, Childe (and Henry) would probably have attended Hall's wedding (BH Fletcher, "Hall, Hessel Duncan (1891-1976)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 19 December 2021, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hall-hessel-duncan-10394/text18417>).

- 4 Ironically, the silence means that the only references are the few which identify that Childe was at Oxford during the War; none examine his journey there.
- 7 One possibility is that he may have planned to improve his German and French language skills. While a substantial number of the archaeology journals at the University of Sydney in his undergraduate days were in German or French, there is almost no academic or social record of Childe studying modern languages. Yet, he later appears to have been sufficiently fluent in both German and French to earn an income as a translator. See Peter Gathercole, Terry Irving, and Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "A Childe bibliography: A hand-list of the works of Vere Gordon Childe," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 205-206.
- 8 Contemporary residents of Sydney will be shocked to learn that the *Daily Telegraph* was formerly 'progressive'.
- 13 Although Myres was also delivering the inaugural Sather Lectures at the University of California, Berkeley in Spring, 1914 (Timothy Champion, "Childe and Oxford," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 16), it seems that he returned to Britain before travelling to Australia, as, according to the *Orvieto* passenger list, he arrived in Fremantle on August 4th with the main BAAS party from Britain. "The Orvieto's Passengers," *Advertiser (Adelaide, SA)*, 5 August 1914, 19.
- 15 *Report of the Eighty-fourth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: Australia 1914* (John Murray, 1915), 681-682. Fisher remained, technically, the Prime Minister for almost a month after the 1913 federal election; the election's outcome took some weeks to finalise.
- 16 Rivett had been Victoria's 1907 Rhodes scholar. Coincidentally, GV Portus, who later figured fairly prominently in Childe's life, had been NSW's 1907 Rhodes scholar.
- 17 Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, 686. After returning , in 1911, to Australia from his Oxford studies, Rivett married the daughter of Sir Alfred Deakin, one of the recurrent Prime Ministers through the first decade of federated Australia. Deakin had originally represented the Protectionist Party, sometimes forming government with the Labour Party. He was eventually the first leader of Australia's conservative Commonwealth Liberal Party (John Scheckter, " "Modern in Every Respect": The 1914 Conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science," *Journal of the European Association for Studies of Australia* 5 (2014): 15, note 5).
- 18 Report, *84th BAAS Meeting Australia*, xlvi . Myres was the President of Section H in 1909, however, in 1914 he had no official role with Section H. Childe ended up as Section H President in 1938, after becoming more involved with BAAS research projects from 1926 on.
- 23 Depending upon its editorial traditions, the 'news' pages started half to two thirds of the way into that issue. In other words, if an issue had twenty pages, the 'news' would start roughly around page 14; if an issue had four pages, its 'news' would probably be on page 3.
- 25 One of the professors was Miles Burkitt's father, who held a Cambridge Chair for Divinity; Miles was at a dig in Russia when war declared (Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "The roots of the first Cambridge textbooks on European prehistory: An analysis of Miles Burkitt's formative trips to Spain and France," *Complutum*, 2013, vol. 24, num. 2 (2013): 115).
- 32 "Imperial Despatches," *The Argus*, 3 August 1914, 16. Col. Legge had been appointed to this role on 1 May 1914, towards the end of a two year posting in London, where he had been "Australia's representative on the Imperial General Staff".

- 33 By chance, Lord Kitchener and Oxford's Professor AH Sayce had a long standing friendship. Sayce, was a Queens College Oxford Fellow, Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology and later, Professor of Assyriology (Stephen H. Langdon, "Archibald Henry Sayce," *The Expository Times* 31, no. 3 (1919): 118). See also Sayce's 1923 autobiography.
- 49 It was later stated that the supposed destination of Sydney was a ruse and that the *Pfalz* was actually intending to sail straight for South America, to avoid possible seizure (AW Jose, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918. Volume IX–The Royal Australian Navy, 1914–1918*, (Halstead Press, 1941), 547).
- 50 The incident, coming within an hour of Britain's official declaration of war, has been described as possibly the war's first shot (Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI – Australia During The War* (Angus & Robertson, 1937), 37).
- 54 The issue had an odd tale about *Scharzfels* being seized in Adelaide on Thursday and shifted to another dock. *Orsova* also had cargo for Suez itinerary? But it also included an entire page of election coverage – with photographic portraits – of each of the lower and upper house South Australian candidates in the forthcoming federal election.
- 55 <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/australia-1914-baas-british-association-advancement-science-meeting-sydney-etc> viewed 27 January 2022. Note: *Orsova* has scanned as *Orsovo*.
- 57 Besides the overall 'newsworthiness', the shipping companies and their associates purchased much of the newspapers' advertising space, thus funding the newspapers.
- 59 Patrick Beesly, *Room 40: British naval intelligence, 1914-18* (Hamish Hamilton, 1982), 2. Undersea cables remain an essential component of our international communications. The 2022 Tongan volcanic eruption severed cables in the Pacific, disrupting information flows until repairs, more than a week later. <https://www.networkcomputing.com/networking/tonga-volcano-highlights-global-undersea-cable-network-fragility> 93% of world's communications is (still) carried on cables.
- 62 Technically, codes and ciphers are slightly different (Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 13).
- 64 In 2017, Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum mounted an exhibition, *Codebreakers and Groundbreakers*, exploring these traditions. An accompanying publication with the same name, brings together a collection of short papers by scholars, exploring various facets of this heritage. In the Foreword, Tim Knox writes, "The aim was rather to show material from archives and collections that normally either require special permission to be viewed ... or ones usually accessed only by researchers in particular fields (such as the Turing archive held in King's College Cambridge or the Sir Arthur Evans and the Sir John Myres Archives held by the Department of Antiquities of the Ashmolean Museum). The amazing skills shared by the codebreakers and those who deciphered ancient scripts can thus be considered together." (Ioannis Galanakis, Anastasia Christophilopoulou, and James Grime, eds., *Codebreakers and Groundbreakers*, (Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017), viii).
- 66 Beesly, *Room 40*, 3. Interestingly, Beesly is also making an implied distinction between Navy and Military intelligence. It was also noted that the RAN was (briefly) considered the most sophisticated in the world because all its hardware was new.
- 71 Coincidentally, the BAAS delegates had arrived in Melbourne on 12 August, after completing their Adelaide programs and catching the specially organised overnight trains. The *Hobart* incident has recently been described in a non-academic but popularly readable text (James

Phelps, *Australian Code Breakers: Our top-secret war with the Kaiser's Reich* (HarperCollins, 2020), 66-70).

- 72 Fahey notes that following a 1914 Court ruling, an original of the seized item had to be lodged with the relevant Court. The proscribed timeframes allowed for copies to be made (Fahey, *Australia's First Spies*, 49). Previous accounts do not include the Court dealings.
- 74 Fahey, *Australia's First Spies*, 50; Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 33-40. Straczek makes the intriguing observation that the RAN does not seem to have been advised of the existence of Room 40.
- 75 Straczek's understanding in 2008 was that the other codebooks seized from other German-flagged vessels impounded after Britain's declaration of war, were "standard commercial codes of no military value" (Straczek, *RAN Signals Intelligence*, 26).
- 76 The Advertiser also named the vessel as *Griefwald* [sic].

Chapter 6 – The Great War, 1914 to 1917

- 1 There were several travellers from the University of Sydney who disembarked at Plymouth before continuing on to either Oxford or Cambridge, including Launcelot Harrison (Zoology) and his wife, Amy Mack (Timothy Champion, pers. comm. 12 May 2022).
- 3 Doron Lamm, "British soldiers of the First World War: creation of a representative sample," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* (1988): 58. Britain's population in 1914 was approximately 42 million people, compared to an Australian population of just under five million people (JB Trivett, *The Official Year Book of New South Wales 1916* (WA Gullick, Government Printer, 1917), 439). Britain's land area was (is) less than half that of the Australian state of New South Wales.
- 8 Gregory, *The last great war*, 37. Gregory cites the example of Oxford's Professor of Greek, the Australian-born Gilbert Murray, as a prominent liberal thinker who was appalled by Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium.
- 9 Winter, "Oxford and the First World War", 8. Some Anglican clergy were also inclined to frame the conflict as a 'Holy War' against perceived German authoritarianism (John A. Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance: the essential contribution of Canon David John Garland," *Pacifica* 19, no. 1 (2006): 60).
- 10 The Oxford (and Cambridge) students who enlisted had a higher mortality rate than the broader, serving population – more than 20% were killed. After the war, many survivors ardently supported the formation of the League of Nations (Winter, "Oxford and the First World War", 24).
- 11 Henry's War Record noted that he had served in France and Salonica (sic) from 1914 to 1917, with 1914 crossed out and 1915 written above. <https://archives-search.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/35681?keywords=Henry%2C+Harry&highlights=WyJoZW5yeS-wiLCJoYXJyeSld&lsk=fc0fcf4095cfa1114c59b9c902926264>
- 12 Though Henry enlisted in September 1914, the 7th Battalion did not ship out until 21 September, 1915, to Boulogne. In November 1915, they shipped to Salonika. 7th Battalion information <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-british-infantry-regiments-of-1914-1918/oxfordshire-buckinghamshire-light-infantry/>. Viewed 20 May 2022. Uniform information - <https://wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=6847>

- Henry noted in his War Record that in 1917 and 1918, he transferred to the RAF and served in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia.
- 16 Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 89-90. Curiously, Blleloch seems to have been elected as a Member of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (SPHS) in 1920 – one of many. There appears to have been a very successful recruitment drive that year for new Members – see SPHS Officers and Council for 1920-1921.
- 18 Winter, "Oxford and the First World War", 6. Kushner noted with surprise in 1999, that "only one study of these Belgians has been written" (Tony Kushner, "Local heroes: Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities* 18, no. 1 (1999): 2). He estimated 250,000 refugees, rather than Winter's 200,000. His paper has since been cited around thirty times, mostly during the 2010s.
- 19 Timothy Champion, "Childe and Oxford," *European Journal of Archaeology* 12, no. 1-3 (2009): 20. I have tried – unsuccessfully – to confirm whether other University of Sydney postgraduate scholarship recipients to Oxford also took the Oxford undergraduate examinations for their degree. Thus far, this does not seem to be the case but more research is required.
- 23 "Personal," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 2 September 1916, 10; *The Western Australian*, 22 September 1916, 9. Special thanks to Dr. Meheux for bringing this to my attention. Notably, Professor Burrows, a friend of Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, died in 1920 and his Kings College archives from were then sent to the Greek Legation (Richard Clogg, "Anglo-Greek Attitudes: an introduction," in *Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History* (Springer 2000), 5-6).
- 26 *Oxford University Gazette*, 13 July 1916, p. 589. Further thanks to Dr. Meheux for alerting me to the 17 January 2023 upload of the newly-digitised *Gazettes* of the period.
[https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/1915-1916 - Vol 46/21905559](https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/1915-1916_-_Vol_46/21905559)
- 27 Sherratt stated that Childe had "transferred" from the Diploma to the BLitt (Andrew Sherratt, "V. Gordon Childe: archaeology and intellectual history" *Past & Present* 125 (1989), 155). This skims the conventional procedure involved. Conversely, if the BLitt was commenced at the outset, some similar process could be expected.
- 28 Green states that the teaching staff for Childe's Diploma course were JD Beazley, JL Myres and M Tod and that he completed a year of the Diploma (Green, *Prehistorian*, 14, 20). Alternatively, Childe may have only done a few weeks of it (Terry Irving, *The fatal lure of politics: the life and thought of Vere Gordon Childe* (Monash University Publishing, 2020), 57).
- 29 Patrick Beesly, *Room 40: British naval intelligence, 1914-18* (Hamish Hamilton, 1982), 76. It would later emerge that although relevant German W/T messages had been intercepted, their HVB cipher key had been changed, making them much harder to decode. London's Room 40 had forwarded them to the RAN office in Melbourne but unfortunately the battle took place the day before successful decipherment (John Fahey, *Australia's first spies: the remarkable story of Australia's intelligence operations, 1901-1945* (Allen & Unwin, 2018), 50; Jozef Straczek, *The origins and development of Royal Australian Naval signals intelligence in an era of imperial defence 1914-1945*, (PhD diss., University of NSW, 2008), pp. 41-42, 46). In a strange coincidence, several years later, the Childe family sold Chalet Fontenelle in the Blue Mountains and built a new residence/ guest house on the other side of the highway. Architecturally inferior but closer to the railway station, the new dwelling was named, Coronel.
- 38 Each BSA Annual included a List of Directors, Honorary Students and Students. The Associates listing was only added later but in the 1933 List, all Associates from 1896 to 1932 are named. There are 23 of them. Childe is not included. <https://www-cambridge->

[org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/annual-of-the-british-school-at-athens/article/list-of-directors-honorary-students-students-and-associates/D3CBB06BBA6D68D7AEEA1D4A1D556310](https://www.cambridge.org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/annual-of-the-british-school-at-athens/article/list-of-directors-honorary-students-students-and-associates/D3CBB06BBA6D68D7AEEA1D4A1D556310) Perhaps by coincidence, in the 1914/1915 accounts, Queen's College made a "donation" of £5 and Magdalen College (Myres' Oxford College) donated £10 (Donations:193) <https://www.cambridge.org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/annual-of-the-british-school-at-athens/article/donations-and-subscriptions-19141915/10A2F2F58AC1B6F0A80BD8DFBCB84D9E>

- 45 Gill, "BSA, 1886-1919", 61. This also seems to continue a BSA tradition of diverse linguistic skills; Wace's predecessor, Richard Dawkins, Director from 1906 to 1914, was also interested in Sanskrit, Icelandic and Finnish (Gill, "BSA, 1886-1919", 58).
- 46 Wace had studied under Cambridge's Disney Professor of Archaeology, W Ridgeway, who was a theorist rather than a field excavator. In terms of scholarly attitude, Ridgeway was a role model to some, but there were professional tensions with Oxford archaeologists, including Evans and Myres. Wace appears to have tried for a middle path, adopting Ridgeway principles but maintaining communication with Evans and Myres (MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 266).
- 47 Richard Clogg, "Academics at War: The British School at Athens during the First World War," *British School at Athens Studies* (2009): 163; David WJ Gill, "Harry Pirie-Gordon: Historical research, journalism and intelligence gathering in the Eastern Mediterranean (1908–18)," *Intelligence and National Security* 21, no. 6 (2006): 1045-1046. Greece maintained technically neutral until June, 1917. Like the British, the Germans and the French also had research schools in Athens (Clogg, "Academics at War", 164-165). A further complication arises with the Anglo-Hellenic League, founded in London in 1913; its archives are held at Kings College London have not been examined and may include relevant material.
- 48 Gill, "BSA, 1886-1919", 62. Both Myres and Hogarth had strong links to Naval Intelligence as RNVR officers. Hogarth, Keeper of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum from 1909 to 1927, was (formally) appointed as RNVR Lieutenant Commander in late 1915, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29348/page/10763>. BSA records state that he was in Intelligence from July 1915. Recently available archives seem to reveal an earlier date (Adam John Fraser, "'Nevermind the Camel!': The Hogarth Archive and the Wilderness of Zin," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 155, no. 2 (2023)). BSA records date Myres war service from 1916.
- 50 Lemnos had been an Ottoman territory until the Balkan War of 1912. In February 1915, Venizelos, the Cretan-born Prime Minister of neutral Greece, "granted the British access to the island with its large natural harbour at Mudros" (John N. Yiannakis, "Addressing the Lemnos Heritage of Gallipoli and its Forgotten Foundations," *Modern Greek Studies* (Australia and New Zealand) (2013): 111).
- 54 MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans*, 267. Although MacGillivray gives 3 March 1915 as the date of Wace's letter, this is likely a typo; 30 March is the date. Special thanks to Dr. Meheux for drawing my attention to MacGillivray's text.
- 55 By a cruel coincidence, what was to become the genocide of the Armenians commenced only a few hours earlier.
- 56 A reference point – from 26 April to 31 July 1915, *The Times* published 537 items with "Dardanelles" in the text. Also, the only remaining Australian submarine, AE2, was sunk in Dardanelles on 29 April 1915, and its crew captured.

- 57 'Debriefing', ie 'talking through confronting experiences' is a concept entangled with cultural expectations prevailing in a particular time and place.
- 62 Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 182. In the intervening decades, there have been allegations that the sinking of a passenger liner, *Lusitania*, might encourage the US to join the war effort. Further discussion of the evidence is beyond the scope of this dissertation (Beesly, *Room 40*, 85-86). The US, however, chose to maintain its neutral status for another two years.
- 66 The signatories of the refutation are unknown. Childe may or may not have been one.
- 71 Childe had probably been familiar with the Journal before leaving Sydney, as Professor Woodhouse remained one of its Members. Interestingly, Childe uses site measurements in metres, the French standard at that time, rather than using the imperial measures of feet and yards (V. Gordon Childe, "On the date and origin of Minyan ware," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 35 (1915): 196).
- 74 *Oxford University Gazette*, 15 March 1916, 364. Before the war was declared in 1914, Myres had expected that, in 1915, he would be delivering a lecture series in the US at the University of California Berkeley (Champion, "Childe and Oxford", 16).
- 77 HD Hall appears to have been mentored by George Bernard Shaw, but further research is required.
- 79 Hall may also have brought a copy of the most recent issue of *Hermes*, Vol XXI, no. 1, May 1915. This included reference to one of the University's first war casualties, HN MacLaurin, a young barrister and son of the former Chancellor, killed at Gallipoli in April, 1915 (p. 14). He was likely known to both Childe and Evatt.
- 80 Before the war, Wilson had been the University of Sydney's Professor of Anatomy and was closely involved with Section H of BAAS, especially during the 84th meeting; after the war, he became the Professor of Anatomy at Cambridge.
- 82 Mark David Kaufman, "Spyography: Compton Mackenzie, Modernism, and the Intelligence Memoir" *Space Between: Literature & Culture, 1914-1945* 13, (2017): 3-4 of 14. Absurd though Mackenzie's career trajectory sounds, in 1933 he was found guilty of breaching the Britain's *Official Secrets Act*, by later describing details of his Athens 1915-1916 posting in a 1932 memoir. Ironically, the verdict confirmed its 'truth' (Kaufman, "Compton Mackenzie", 2-5 of 14).
- 90 Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI – Australia During The War* (Angus & Robertson, 1937), 320. The previous Labor PM, Andrew Fisher, who had won the first double dissolution election in September 1914, resigned in October 1915, due to ill health. His Attorney General, Billy Hughes took over the Prime Ministership.
- 93 SPHS 1915-1916 – Student Associates, xxxvii. The other two were R. de Bere and Miss M. Astley. For Childe's election date, special thanks to Dr Meheux for alerting me to Council Minute Book 9, p. 19.
- 94 Privileges and responsibilities are outlined in the Rules and Regulations. <https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/journal-of-hellenic-studies/article/rules-of-the-society/DAD384A8EA99FFA8ACBB1E60280CBB38> Interestingly, this is prior to his article appearing in the JHS.
- 95 Childe was also nominated and elected as a Member in 1922. <https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/core/journals/journal-of-hellenic-studies/article/list-of-officers-and-members/B476CB064F0D4F69944EE29939E195B7>

- 106 Moses, "Anglicanism and Anzac observance", 73. Further complicating matters, 24-29 April, 1916 saw the armed Irish 'Rising' or Rebellion, in which Irish Republicans rebelled against British rule in Ireland. This conflict is beyond the scope of this thesis.
- 107 Although Blleloch decided to join the FAU, they only accepted those referred by a military authority (Meheux, "Conscientious objectors", 189). In another account, he was arrested and in a medical exam in May 1916, was again found unfit (Wetter, *Conscription and Conscientious Objectors*, 71). Notably, when he joined the FAU, he specified that he was not affiliated with any religious tradition.
- 108 The 'sign-up date' appears in the 'Period of Service' field. By 1917, the design of the card template had been updated slightly so thereafter, the photo was positioned on the lower left rather than the right, and the 'sign-up' date was entered next to the more clearly named, 'Agreement dated'. In 1916, the Agreement Date was entered alongside the label, 'Period of Service'. This was usually approximately two weeks earlier than the commencement of service, listed on the reverse side of the personnel card. <https://fau.quaker.org.uk/search-view?forename=david&surname=blleloch>
- 114 On 27 May 1916, Childe wrote to Murray about Dutt. This letter is held by Oxford's Bodleian Library in Gilbert Murray papers, MS375 and MS376. A copy also exists in the NSW Mitchell Library Munster archives, Ref 446662. Correspondence from Childe to Gilbert re Tal Davies, commencing around 10 May 1916, has also been referenced by Meheux 2017a. Irving 2020 references the 27 May 1916 letter. Coincidentally, when at Oxford on his Rhodes Scholarship, GV Portus had dinner with Professor Murray at his Oxford home in 1910 (Portus, *Happy Highways*, 168).
- 115 Steigerwald, *UDC and suppression of opposition*, 99. In the post-war years, many of those who had survived active duty in the Great War supported the development of *international bodies*, charged with resolving disputes via negotiation rather than armed conflict. The League of Nations was an early iteration of this endeavour.
- 116 Childe would later claim in a letter to Gilbert Murray on 16 March 1917 that Professor Burrows wanted Childe to pursue further ceramic studies. In the absence of Childe's thesis, we do not know if it included relevant archaeological content. Note: the letter is ambiguous; it might be 17 March.
- 124 Dyrenfurth notes that High Commissioner Fisher did not support conscription, infuriating Prime Minister Hughes (Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and villains*, 184). The situation is further complicated because hearings for Britain's Dardanelles Commission, established to examine the appalling outcomes of the campaign, had commenced in August 1916. They ran through much of 1917, with reports presented through 1917. Andrew Fisher was one of its Commissioners (Jenny Macleod, "General Sir Ian Hamilton and the Dardanelles Commission," *War in History* 8, no. 4 (2001): 423, 426). Childe's familiarity with the Commission is unknown.
- 127 The literature uses the terms, 'referendum' and 'plebiscite' interchangeably to describe the voting mechanisms in 1916 and 1917; for simplicity, this text uses only 'referendum'.
- 130 University of Sydney Archives, File M223 (V. G. Childe). This was apparently provided, probably in early-ish 1918, to the University of Sydney's Warden Barff by Australia's Military Intelligence (Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 92).
- 132 The March 1917 letter is also mentioned in a fascinating paper by the late William Peace (William J. Peace, "Vere Gordon Childe and American anthropology," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 44, no. 4 (1988): 419). Minor details in the remainder of the paper warrant checking,

for example, the parameters of the Childe/ Lindsay friendship. For further information about Peace, please see <https://newmobility.com/william-peace/> and <https://stephenkuusisto.com/2019/07/05/farewell-bill-peace/> Irving focusses on other aspects of the letter (Irving, *Fatal lure of politics*, 47).

- 141 National Archives File KV2/2148, handwritten Passport Office Memorandum 200968 noting passport approval only for SS *Rimutaka* travelling via Panama Canal, Childe not to disembark, 26 July 1917; National Archives File KV2/2148, typed transcript re Memorandum 200968, from Passport Office to SS *Rimutaka's* Captain, 31 July 1917; National Archives File KV2/2148, handwritten letter from SS *Rimutaka's* Captain to MI5 Col. Kell reporting that Childe aboard but vessel does not go to New Zealand via Panama Canal, dated 13 August 1917.
- 145 Later scholarship appears to have confirmed the substance of these claims, revealing that Britain and Italy secretly signed the Treaty of London on 26 April 1915. This provided for Italy to take control of the coastal stretches of Albania and Croatia after a successful conclusion of the war by Britain (Albrecht-Carrié, "Treaty of London 1915", 364-367; May, "Treaty of London", 44).
- 146 Irving, "Selection of letters", 28. Using the letter writing convention of the time, Childe wrote his address in the upper right corner. He gave a Baker St, London address. In his opening paragraph he states, "I shall soon be in Australia myself but as the matter seemed urgent I'll try sending this on ahead."
- 148 The letter is now in Australia's National Library, however, due to the Library's renovation works, the Archive files were not expected to be available until later in 2023.

Chapter 7 – Misinformation, disinformation and the unknowns

- 11 Interestingly, Childe also maintained close relationships with (most of) his religious relatives.
- 12 Herbert Vere Evatt, *Social and Political Tendencies in Australia* (Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Sydney, 1917), 84-110. Various scholars (Peter Beilharz, "The Young Evatt—Labor's New Liberal," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 39, no. 2 (1993): 168) have believed the thesis to have been 'lost' as it was not located in the University of Sydney's Collections, however, it has been archived in the Evatt Collection at Flinders University Library.