

Various bits of tape under embargo

INTERVIEWED 1980

A. PORTEOUS - DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Medievalist in English, Edinburgh University graduate, joined staff in 1959 --

Details of appointment; interviewed at 2.30 a.m. in Edinburgh by Prof. Keith Isles.

025 Description of Professor Murray Todd.

035 [Workload: 109 lectures in first year.]

M. Todd himself: 15 lectures per week at Canberra University College in 1950s.

The English department - pluralistic, agreeing to differ, slow turnover, happy identity.

"Happy flamboyance" of both Murray Todd and James McAuley.

125 The 3 or 4 careers of J. McAuley:

School of Pacific Administration

Arguably the finest poet writing in Australia

Teacher and critic

Political. Practising Catholic.

Last year of life - a meaning from dying.

He attracted some dislike - just as Thomas More did.

A sharp tongue and a formidable manner - "a marvellous larrikinism" "a scrutinising intelligence".

People who were ideologically opposed to him didn't like him - and perhaps vice versa.

313 University politics - Todd and McAuley's role - was McAuley a 'grey eminence'? No - Just as in the Orr case, you don't need conspiracy theories - you just need people being people.

345 Extreme view that University was run by Roman Catholic church - utter nonsense.

365 Reverting to the University when A.P. arrived.

Ian Smith, Jack McManners, Murray Todd, - a new generation, "the triumvirate" as they were known.

Smallness of University then hard to imagine.

415 Ref. to Mac Urquhart - "a great and good man".

A. PORTEOUS (contd.)

- 530 Underlying stability of Tasmanian community and Tasmanian University -
 EMBARGO could be mistaken for student apathy. "Attempt to radicalise campus
 from Monash" - ref. to Albert Ranger under embargo (why?)
 [Is this not a conspiracy theory you are advancing?]
- End This account of Tasmanian society and the University community tells
 Side 1 you more about A. Porteous than about Tas. society.
- Side 2 Anecdote illustrating V-C's "breathtaking 18th century sense of
 030 position and privilege".
 045 Tas. described (by A.D. Hope?) as the last C18 society.
 060 The late stages of the Orr case.
 The old guard, the new guard and the middle guard.
 120 Council's refusal of Orr's resignation was crucial improper action,
 from point of view of Staff Association.
 130 Reaction of "hearty laughter" to "Eddy's misguided book".
 150 "We will bring the University of Tasmania to its knees" - said some
 EMBARGO member of the Federation of Univ. Staff Associations.
 180+ Roles of Malcolm McRae, John Greenhill in Staff Association at time.
 250-
 320 Views on academic freedom.
 325 The "takeover" of the T.C.A.E. - they had no structure to appeal to.
 Discursus on concept of University and merits and demerits of
 University and T.C.A.E. positions
- 530 Role of Sir George Cartland. Details of meetings in 1976 period.
- Side 3 Tasmania a cultural frontier.
 000 (This section illustrates Sandy).
 050 Different from Edinburgh - but not changing into North American model.
 Anti-intellectualism in Australian universities. The incidence of
 mature students - perhaps a result of disseminated affluence in
 Australia.
 But University will not become a "mere" community college because
 universities have a considerable strength.

A. PORTEOUS (contd.)

- 140 Effect on English Department of current financial stringency. "Nobody in the University has been crucified". In many ways the expansion was forced on the University by politicians, who are now forcing it to cut back drastically.
Medieval studies in English not inconvenienced (!)
Library funds? "This has become an impossible commitment".
- + Excursus on libraries. Work of Gordon Rimmer (A.P. has copy of his report).
- 222 The University as a social institution.
Personalities. Loss of a happy and positive and perhaps old-fashioned bohemianism among students in the seventies. Everything became terribly serious e.g. students admitted to Faculties, "we were paid to sit around ... and they weren't" ...
Excursus on student involvement in administration.
"Compulsive permissiveness".
- 295 Person unnamed who left University spectacularly before the war having "literally" lost his shirt at Elwick - repatriated by subscription of his colleagues (an unlikely story).
- 315 Formal demands on students increased with increasing numbers.
Necessity of "intellectual leisure" - numbers of students who say they would like to do the year again.
- 370 A story about student radicalism!
- 410 Eccentric staff - Gerald Firth story about building a fire to boil his billy in his study because of failure of heating system. (also an unlikely story).
- 510 Colour of the Arts buildings panels - a pure accident - two stories (a) architect had specified charcoal but as this temporarily unavailable the Public Works Dept. went for the next colour on the list which was chartreuse (b)
- 540 The heating drama - no heating for 5 years and then wisps of steam rising from the lawns - like Iceland -

A. PORTEOUS (contd.)

595 General approval of Univ. of Tasmania, but the Humanities have not had an appropriate share of university resources.

Side 4 Students now self-selecting - smaller numbers - levels of performance have risen - we make more demands and they have been met - since mid-60s?

END 075