

THE ANU ARCHIVES PROGRAM & THE FRIENDS OF  
THE NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE PRESENT:



ANU PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2009

## The Eighth Annual Archives Lecture **RETHINKING *THE AUSTRALIAN LEGEND***

**Graeme Davison**

Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor, Monash University



**Tuesday 8 September, 5.30–6.30pm**

McDonald Room, Menzies Library, Building 2, Fellows Rd, ANU

This lecture is free and open to the public.  
Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

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Fifty years after its publication Russel Ward's book *The Australian Legend* remains the classic account of our national origins. In tracing Australia's national ethos to the folksongs and ballads of the 'nomad tribe' of bush workers, Ward and his Leftist contemporaries were rejecting the high culture of international modernism and reviving an older, romantic paradigm of national origins. How did their responses to the events of their time, especially the popular front against fascism, the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War, influence their interest in folklore and their belief in the need for a binding national myth? Yearnings for an ancestral past rooted in the land remain a key feature of national culture. What can the story of *The Australian Legend* tell us about the continuing dilemmas of living in a 'new' country?

Graeme Davison has taught at the University of Melbourne, Harvard University, where he was Visiting Professor of Australian Studies, and at Monash University, as Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor. His main interest is in the history of cities in Australia, Britain and the United States. He is author of *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, *The Unforgiving Minute: How Australia Learned to Tell the Time* and *Car Wars: How the Car Won Our Hearts and Conquered Our Cities* and an editor of *Australians 1888* and the *Oxford Companion to Australian History*. He has been active as an advisor to heritage bodies, museums and in other fields of public history where his publications include *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*. His current projects include a book of essays on intellectuals and Australian cities, a study of Australian nationalism, and a 50th anniversary history of Monash University.

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