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Do It Properly and Make The Most Of It: Western Australian Architects And The UK Working Holiday 1946-1960.

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Abstract:

This thesis examines the working holiday to the United Kingdom (UK), as undertaken by Western Australian architects between 1946 and 1960. Specifically, it charts the institutions, mechanisms and influences that shaped the development of this phenomenon, and the effect it had on the architectural profession in Western Australia. During this fifteen-year period, approximately thirty young architects made the journey from Perth to the UK to pursue work experience and further education. Here, they would typically spend several years working as architectural assistants, directly participating in the postwar rebuilding of Britain through the documentation and design of schools, factories, residential units, commercial buildings and cultural centres.

Adopting a group biography approach, this study explores the paths and influences that shaped this tradition, which, by the end of the 1950s, was so entrenched in the lived experience of Perth architects that it was colloquially known as the 'sixth year' of the diploma course. The thesis charts the students' routes travelled to and from the UK, the kinds of practices and type of work encountered, and the professional and social networks that were formed during their time there. Significantly, it looks at the role that this working holiday had in the making of a local architecture culture in Western Australia upon their return to Perth. Those architects who travelled and returned were able to funnel their experience and enthusiasm into producing buildings, editing journals, giving lectures, teaching, and performing in plays, in an effort to stimulate the local architectural profession and galvanise the local architectural community. This thesis argues that the working holiday had a major effect on the shaping and development of the architectural profession in Western Australia in the postwar period, and as a phenomenon that has yet to be acknowledged. The thesis also acknowledges the contribution that Western Australian architects, and by extension architects from across Australian and New Zealand, made to the architectural profession in Britain, providing labour, expertise and alternate perspectives across a range of major architectural projects.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated.

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

(iii) the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed: Andrew Marshall Murray 2.4.2023

Much of the primary research for this thesis was undertaken in Boorloo/Perth, on the unceded lands of the Whadjuk people of Noongar Boodjar. This thesis was also written and researched in Naarm/Melbourne on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. Australia always was and always will be First Nations land.

Preface

This project has its origins when I enrolled to do a Master of Philosophy at the University of Melbourne. Having trained as an architect in Perth, Western Australia before moving to Melbourne in 2012, I decided to undertake a research higher degree in 2015 as an introduction to the world of architectural history and academia. The MPhil was a short project which looked at the career of a significant yet understudied architect from Western Australia, Ronald Jack (Gus) Ferguson (b. 1931-). I was supervised by Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad, who would also go on to supervise this thesis.

Through the study of Ferguson's career, the particularities of architectural practice in Western Australia began to reveal themselves. It became clear how embedded the profession was in an overlapping of personal and professional relationships, reinforced through the state's relatively small population and geographic isolation. This project, and my ongoing relationship with Ferguson revealed that any future research would need to engage with this specific scenario. Through this research project my interest in the nature of the architecture culture in Western Australia developed, and I was keen to continue my studies in a doctoral thesis.

My initial PhD project was to look at the relationship between WA and the United Kingdom, with a focus on the extraordinary number of British migrants that arrived in Perth from the 1950s onwards. But the pandemic of 2019 intervened and I was required to rethink the project given the unfolding situation. As I remained locked up in my apartment for much of 2020 with no access to archives or a library, I kept returning to my conversations with Ferguson, and in particular, the fondness he had for the working holiday that he and his wife Clare undertook in the late 1950s. Whether this was a shrewd refiguring of the information on my behalf, or part of an unconscious internal desire to escape the confines of my apartment and see the world is unclear. Either way the decision to focus on the working holiday was made.

In May 2021 the opportunity to move to London arose through my partner Clare's work, and with it an opportunity to escape the continual cycle of lockdowns in Melbourne. I had always planned to go to London for my fieldwork, primarily to access the archives of those British migrants who had trained at the Architectural Association (AA) and the Regent Street Polytechnic (RSP), but the events of March 2020 put paid to that. But now here was a chance to follow in the footsteps of those people I was studying. My own working holiday in London. The move turned out to

beneficial for a number of reasons, but not least for the perspective on the working holiday as taken by the architects I was studying and had been talking to from the 1950s. The sheer act of being in London, away from home, revealed things about this mode of travel I had not considered and as such, this move made an enormous impact on the way I wrote and thought about the working holiday and thus, this thesis. Retracing the itineraries of those people I was studying, visiting the offices where they worked, drinking at the pubs where they used to meet, and walking the streets where they used to live provided me with insights I had not expected. My perspective on the project, and the idea of the working holiday itself shifted completely, and as such is important to identify as a central aspect of the development of this thesis. Through this act I have positioned myself within the tradition I am studying. I have become another Western Australian architect who made the long journey to live and work in the UK, a tradition which stretches back to the 1930s and will almost certainly continue into the foreseeable future.

This research project was supported through an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship. My fieldwork was funded by the Henry and Rachel Ackman Travelling Scholarship and the Norman Macgeorge Travelling Scholarship, both awarded through The University of Melbourne.

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Caroline and Jane at the research office.

Naomi, Sophie and Sarah at the UoM ABP library.

I would like to make particular mention of the people I Interviewed for this project whose patience, friendship, generosity and openness lies at the heart of this project: Beth Duncan, Bill Weedon, Bob Allan, Bob Gare, Colin Moore, Dennis Silver, Ian Watson, Don Bailey, John White, Ralph Drexel, Rob Kornweibel, Ronald Bodycoat, Walter Hunter, Barbara Hill, Gus Ferguson. I will never forget those shared moments, and am forever grateful for the time you gave me and the project.

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Abbreviations:

AA	The Architectural Association
AASA	The Australian Architectural Students Association
ACP	Architects Co-Partnership (Formerly Architects Co-operative Partnership)
AIAWA	Australian Institute of Architects, Western Australia Chapter
AD	Architectural Design
AJ	The Architects' Journal
AR	The Architectural Review
ARBWA	Architects Registration Board of Western Australia
ASAWA	Architectural Students Association of Western Australia
CCN	Cameron Chisholm Nicol
CPB	Chamberlin Powell and Bon
DSM	Duncan Stephen and Mercer
HWL	Hobbs, Winning and Leighton
NSW	New South Wales
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Later the AIA- Australian Institute of Architects)
RAIAWA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects Western Australia Chapter
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RSP	Regent Street Polytechnic
PTC	Perth Technical College
PWD	Public Works Department
SLWA	State Library of Western Australia

SROWA	State Records Office of Western Australia
UK	The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UWA	University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia

Chapter 1 Introduction.

> *I still find it difficult to clarify my reasons for leaving Australia. The first desires to leave came in the last years of my university course. What were occasional uncertainties became frequent certainties, and the first hints of alienation became a perplexing but emphatic, realization. Of what? Singularly, that I must leave Australia, and escape to anywhere.*[1]
>
> -Ross Lonnie, 'An Immovable Feast,' 1972.

In April 1959 British architects Chamberlin, Powell & Bon (CPB) submitted their Report to the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London on Residential Development within the Barbican Area, on instruction from the Barbican Committee.[2] The submission outlined their proposed scheme for the Barbican estate, a 40-acre development which would house more than 4000 residents across more than 2000 individual units. This was to be a landmark report. Following a series of previously unsuccessful attempts, their submission was approved which resulted in the young, relatively inexperienced practice being awarded the contract for one of London's most significant postwar housing projects.

The report included the names of all people, both permanent and temporary members of the practice, that had contributed to the submission. Of the 32 names listed on the report, 4 of them were from Perth, Western Australia, a small city more than 14,000 kilometres away from London.[3] Ross Chisholm, Ronald Ferguson, Clare Ferguson, and Eugene Mapp had all travelled to London where they spent several years working and living together, before returning home to Perth. That these four people from the same small city ended up working together in the same office in London is not without logic. Clare and Ronald Ferguson were newly married and had travelled to London together with Mapp. Chisholm was a close friend of the Ferguson's and Mapp, and had landed Ronald the job with CPB in the first place. These four friends from Western Australia did

---

[1] Ross Lonnie, "An Immovable Feast," *Westerly* 1(April 1972): 65.
[2] Peter Chamberlin, Geoffrey Powell and Christoph Bon, *Barbican Redevelopment: Report to the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London on Residential Development with the Barbican Area* (London: City of London, 1959), n.p.
[3] Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, *Barbican Redevelopment* (1959), n.p.

not travel to London and end up working on the Barbican redevelopment by coincidence. They were participating in a well-established tradition of the Australian working holiday to the UK, a path that had been well travelled by many before them and which continues to be traversed today.

This thesis examines the phenomenon of the working holiday, and sets out to investigate the series of events, institutional initiatives, and networks which would lead, at least in one instance, to four close friends working together on one of the most significant building projects of Britain in the twentieth century. It examines why, how, and who undertook the working holiday to the UK, and the institutions and people that were instrumental in shaping this journey in this period. It charts the variety of factors, motivations, and influences that shaped the working holiday as taken by Western Australian architects and highlights the contributions that people like Chisholm, Ferguson, Ferguson and Mapp made to the postwar building project in the UK.

Adopting a group biography approach, and using oral histories, archival material, and a range of primary and secondary literature, this research project examines the phenomenon of the Australian working holiday to the UK between 1946 and 1960, using Perth, Western Australia as a case study. This was a phenomenon experienced by a significant proportion of architects in Perth and was facilitated largely through the informal network of the major student organization in the state, the Architectural Students Association of Western Australia. Although the working holiday was a relatively short experience when taken against the decades long careers of those that went, this thesis argues that its significance far outweighs its temporal value. I spoke to a number of those architects that went who were able to recall their travels with a clarity of detail and enthusiasm for a journey taken more than 50 years ago, sharing with me treasured mementos and photographs still retained from their trips. These careful and considered recollections demonstrated to me the long-lasting and profound effect that this experience had on them, both personally and professionally. The working holiday to the UK was a journey that would bear witness to the hopes, ambitions, and aspirations of a new generation of architects and their broader social milieu. The journey to the UK and the years spent living in London and surrounding towns provided freedom, and a space far away from home in which these ambitions could be both examined and tested before returning to Perth where they could be enacted and deployed in both their personal and professional lives.

Throughout this thesis a number of topics are touched upon including the lingering influence of imperialism in the British capital, authorship, and architectural influence. While some of these are examined directly, others bubble away under the surface. More broadly it examines the intertwined nature of a global postwar architectural culture and sets out to demonstrate the primacy of student-led initiatives in the formation of the architectural profession. This thesis argues that the working holiday in the UK exerted a powerful and significant influence on the architectural profession in Western Australia, and demonstrates that it was a largely student-led, autonomous initiative with an internally perpetuating logic that saw it persist across a number of decades and changing student cohorts. While this appears as a study of geographically bounded, peripherally located architecture culture, an examination of the working holiday lays bare the intertwined nature of the architectural profession. It shows the extent to which a small city like Perth was entirely tied into the transnational framework of architectural practice in the postwar period.[4]

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the nature of the working holiday as undertaken by recently graduated or registered architects in Western Australia between 1946 and 1960, with a particular focus on a group of architects that travelled together in the mid 1950s It aims to document both the lived experience of those who undertook the journey and the key institutions that supported their visit, and to identify the impact that this journey had on the architectural profession back in Western Australia. Adopting a broadly chronological and narrative approach, the thesis looks at the lives and careers of a group of architects that were trained in Western Australia. It follows them from their training at Perth Technical College or as articled pupils, to their experience living and working in the United Kingdom in the years following the end of World War II, and their return home to Perth.

In studying a group of professionals from a settler society that travelled and worked together in the metropolitan centre of the British Empire, this thesis sits at the intersection of two complementary strands of current concerns within architectural historiography. The first is an ambition to expose or lay bare the extent to which Empire had an effect on architectural

[4] For further discussion on the interface between local and global histories see: Ann Curthoys, "We've Just Started Making National Histories, and You want Us to Stop Already?" in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation,* ed. Antoniette Burton (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 85.

production in the twentieth century. The second concern is an interest in acknowledging the diversity of participants involved in the making of an architecture culture. Through engaging with both these concerns, the thesis aims to further reveal an understanding of architecture as a complex effort that is reliant on a diverse and complex group of participants at all levels, negotiating a series of existing power structures that operated across national and international borders.

This research aim is supported by the following main question:

> How can we historically understand the phenomenon of the working holiday, as undertaken by Western Australian architects in the postwar period?

A number of sub questions are then asked:

> Why did Western Australian architects go to the UK for a working holiday?
>
> What influence did this trip have on individual practice and the architectural profession in Western Australia upon their return?
>
> What systems, networks, and mechanisms supported this tradition, and what enabled it to continue well into the twentieth century?
>
> What were the ranges of experiences that architects from Western Australia had during a working holiday to the UK?
>
> How can we understand the significance of this trip on the architectural culture that developed in Perth in the 1950s.
>
> What contribution did Western Australian architects make in the architectural profession and the postwar rebuilding effort in the United Kingdom?

The thesis uses a range of qualitative methodological approaches and tools that are familiar to the two intersecting interests identified above. These include the use of group biography, oral history, life writing sources and private archives alongside institutional collections, arranged in a broadly narrative style in order to examine the lives of these architects and to address these research questions. These are tools and approaches which allow for a redistribution of power and for voices and experiences outside the metropolitan centre to be shared and incorporated within the historiographical narrative. These are explored in further detail in Chapter 3.

1.2 Significance and Contribution

This thesis provides the first in-depth study of the working holiday, a widely experienced phenomenon within the Australian and New Zealand architectural profession in the twentieth century. Taken as a period of both work experience and an opportunity to pursue further studies, the working holiday provided a defined break between formal study, registration, and the commencement of an architectural career back home. The opportunity to see the world, to experience different architectural cultures and office environments, and to engage with international professional networks meant that the working holiday remained an ambition for many graduates across the country well into the twenty-first century. Across the twentieth century, the experience of the working holiday and the locations visited would vary, between decades, by state, and between countries, but it remains a significant part of many architectural careers in Australia and New Zealand. Despite the widespread nature of the journey, there has been little in the way of scholarship that addresses the significance that this journey had on the architectural profession both locally and internationally.

The study of the working holiday makes a key contribution to both Australian and international scholarship through demonstrating two key outcomes. Firstly, it identifies the considerable impact that the journey had on those graduate architects as a source of inspiration, reflection, and personal growth. The time spent away on the working holiday would directly shape these young architects' approach to architectural practice and their understanding of Perth, both from a cultural perspective and of the architectural profession. Secondly, it demonstrates the contribution that Australian architects made to the architectural profession in the United Kingdom in the postwar period, providing both intellectual and manual labour that would be fuel the massive rebuilding project that was embarked upon following World War II.

This research project makes a scholarly contribution to several intersecting academic fields. Most obviously is the field of architectural history. Here, the thesis makes a number of contributions. Primarily it is in the identification of a local architecture culture and an exploration of a phenomenon which would play a commanding role in the formation and shaping of this culture. There is a clear and articulated architectural culture that developed in Perth around these travels, and this study further contributes to an understanding of how distinct architectural cultures existed and were made across the major cities of Australia in the postwar period. Aside from its novel subject, the thesis also demonstrates the use of a methodological approach uncommon in

the discipline. The use of group biography and related tools and sources including oral history and life writing sources provides an unusual approach to the field, and demonstrates their potential use for similar studies, particularly those dealing with professional groups within the regions.

As a study of Australians travelling to and working in the United Kingdom, the thesis also makes a contribution to the growing field of New Imperial History. Particularly in its exploration of the relationship between dominions and London, the Imperial metropolis, as they developed following World War II through a particular and under examined professional group. It adds knowledge to both a small but significant body of scholarship that examines the contributions of Australians that lived and worked in the United Kingdom in the twentieth century, and also to a growing body of literature that examines at a more macro level the relationship between the United Kingdom and Australia in the period which saw the widespread declining of the Empire in the face of what A.G. Hopkins has described as postcolonial globalization.[5] In particular it demonstrates the extent to which the architectural profession in Britain relied upon, and heavily utilized Imperial labour, particularly white settler colonial subjects from the dominions, well into the twentieth century.[6] In this sense, the thesis follows Edward Said's observation that there was "a colonial actuality existing at the heart of metropolitan life."[7] As Australia broadened its relationships outside the Commonwealth in the postwar period, particularly with the United States and Asia, this study provides further detail as to how this relationship played out. To take one finding from the project, it shows that at an individual level there was an increasing sense of ambivalence and indifference towards Britain – it was simply a convenient and easy place to go - but at a professional level the relationship between Western Australia and Britain strengthened as the decade progressed, with numbers of graduates who travelled there increasing well into the 1960s.

1.3 Scope of Research

This thesis has a clearly defined scope. It examines one aspect of an architectural career – the working holiday – in a group of architects who trained and worked in Western Australia from 1946 to 1960. It has a particular focus on the group of architects that were socially connected, who

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[5] A.G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 696. For further reading see: James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia after Empire* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2010).
[6] See: Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.
[7] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 9.

completed their qualifications in the 1950s, either at the Perth Technical College or through the board registration system, and who subsequently undertook their working holiday during that same decade. It looks only at those architects that travelled to the United Kingdom to live and work, and predominantly those that were based in London. While the focus is on the working holiday as it unfolded in the 1950s, it is bookended by a look at the holiday as it was first emerged in the 1930s and how it developed into the late 1960s.

The project is deliberately narrow in its scope and approach, as a way to complete the aims of the research within the parameters of a doctoral thesis timeline. The working holiday was a widely experienced occurrence in the Australian and New Zealand architectural profession, particularly in the two decades which followed the end of World War II. Architects from both countries, and across all states and territories would embark on journeys overseas with popular destinations including Japan, USA, Canada and South Africa. Architects from this period would also take working holidays interstate, with a number of Perth architects heading to the Eastern States (especially Victoria and New South Wales) and similar exchanges occurred between other major cities and regional towns. While certain conclusions can be drawn from this study and applied nationally, it is important to note that my initial research shows that the working holiday experiences varied significantly from state to state and were strongly influenced by distinct sociopolitical factors in each region.

The number of Victorians and South Australians that went to America in this period for example, is not found in Western Australia. Similarly the 'grand tour' where an architect goes on a specific tour, visiting and photographing projects but without living and working overseas was common in Victoria and not seen in WA. There are also key institutions with which practices in each state became associated with, indicating the importance of networks and personal experience in the journey. During the 1950s, at least five people from Melbourne worked in the London office of Riches and Blythin, while there is no record of anyone from other states working there.[8] Although the individual and state-based experiences may vary considerably, the aim of this research project is to demonstrate the significance of the trip itself.

[8] Donald Bailey, Leslie Perrot, Stuart Warmington, Grahame Shaw, and James Fisher were all employed at Riches and Blythin during the mid 1950s. See: Donald Bailey, interview with Andrew Murray, 14 February 2020, Mt. Albert North, Victoria; Simon Reeves, "Dictionary of Unsung Architects: Grahame Shaw," Accessed 18 May 2022, https://www.builtheritage.com.au/dua_shaw.html

The research presented here is only part of the story. There are simply too many people and too many experiences to fully document the travel details for this period, even for a relatively small architectural community as in Perth. While every attempt was made to capture as much detail about the trips as possible, the intention was not to produce a taxonomic record of the trip but rather a critical reflection and investigation. At one point in 1954, for example, there were at least 15 Western Australian architects living in London, and while every effort was made to track each of them down, proper coverage was beyond the scope of the project. Nonetheless, the thesis has attempted to provide some detail where possible and capture some aspect of the majority of architects that were known to have traveled from Western Australia to the United Kingdom from the period 1946 to 1960, the main study period of the thesis. The experiences of some have fallen through the cracks, with no traces to be found, but where possible some detail has been provided. A corollary of this is that the details of the journey are similarly varied. For some of those that went, extremely detailed itineraries could be reconstructed. Diary entries, photographs, employment records and memoirs meant that their journeys were well captured. Others left behind just fragments.

1.4 Case Study Selection

Western Australia was chosen as the focus of this thesis for a number of reasons, but primarily it is for my own interest and connection with the state. I am originally from Western Australia and completed my first two architectural degrees at the University of Western Australia while living in Perth. This meant that I had a number of contacts and connections to the city and its architectural profession which enabled me to access information and resources that might otherwise be difficult to find. Having spent the years since living in both Melbourne and London, it provided me with a critical distance to the city that I was keen to examine. Perth has remained a place of endless fascination for me, with an architectural community that was both small enough and seemingly vast that one could almost grasp the limits but never find the end.

Perth makes for a compelling case study beyond my personal interests as one of the most geographically isolated major cities in the world. In this sense it offers a unique vantage point through which to view the globalized, interconnected nature of architectural practice in the postwar period. For much of the twentieth century, Perth was at least 3 days travel by rail or car from the nearest city, and more than a week's sail from the next major port. But despite its geographic separation, this thesis demonstrates that the architecture culture of Perth was

completely entangled, and ultimately inseparable from architectural developments that occurred in the metropolitan centre of London. The architecture culture of both cities developed in tandem and in direct relation to each other, despite the enormous distance between them. Within Australia, Western Australia maintains a unique connection with the UK, one arguably stronger than any other state both architecturally and generally.[9] This meant that Western Australia, and the Perth architectural community were better connected internationally, at least in the postwar years, than their counterparts in Melbourne or Sydney. While architects in both Melbourne and Sydney were busy with the postwar construction boom, this thesis illustrates that Perth architects were travelling widely, setting up global networks that would have long lasting ramifications for the local profession for years to come.

1.5 Chapter Overview

The thesis is broken into 5 chapters, comprising three main chapters and bookended with the introduction and a conclusion. It adopts a structure that reflects the system of a travelling theory as developed by Edward Said in which he suggests there are four stages "common to the way any theory or idea travels."[10] Said describes these stages as first, a point of origin "a set of initial circumstances in which the idea came to birth or entered the discourse." Second, is "the distance traversed…as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place where it will come into a new prominence." The third and fourth stages, which are combined in this study, are the condition of acceptance where the idea is transplanted "making possible its introduction of toleration" and the eventual transformation of the idea "by its new uses, its new position in a new time and place."[11] Said's theory provides a neat framework through which to organize this research, and the flow of ideas and the making of architecture culture in Perth as a result of these travels largely accords with Said's formulation.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 describes the origin of the working holiday, both as a historical concept, but also within the specific Western Australian context. It provides an introduction to the topic, alongside a framework and methodology that provides the tools to examine the movement. Chapter 3 looks at 'distance traversed', or the working holiday itself. It

[9] This connection is more closely examined in chapter 2.1.
[10] Edward W. Said, "Travelling Theory," in *The World, The text, The Critic*, ed. Edward W. Said (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 226.
[11] Said, "Travelling Theory," 226-7.

looks at the typical experiences of the working holiday, and the lived experience of those architects that undertook the journey. It explores how they got there, and what they did there. The fourth chapter looks at the conditions for acceptance and the transplanting of ideas in Perth: what happens when those on holiday return home. It looks at what they did, what they built, what they discussed, and how the cycle was reinforced and strengthened again. Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

Each of the three main chapters are broken down into three sections. Chapter 2.1 situates the project within the literature and provides a working definition of the working holiday. Chapter 2.2 then sets out the methodological framework of the thesis. It discusses the use of group biography as an approach and outlines the key tools that are used to support this approach, which include oral history, life writing sources, and personal archival material. Chapter 2.3 examines the origin of the working holiday as it first appeared in the 1930s.

Chapter 3 looks at the UK working holiday in detail - getting there, working there, and living there. Chapter 3.1 identifies how the architectural graduates traveled to the UK, including the various routes and transportation modes they took, and the experiences they had along the way. It also identifies the specific conditions that were set up in Perth that enabled the working holiday to develop and flourish in the immediate postwar period. Chapter 3.2 looks at the experience of working in the UK. It examines the working environments and building typologies they encountered in the UK, the different architectural offices they worked for, and the kind of jobs they undertook. It identifies the contribution that these Western Australian architects made to the UK architectural profession and the institutions, particularly the Architectural Association, which facilitated their ability to find employment. Chapter 3.3 then looks at the experience of living in the UK, particularly in London, and the various encounters that they had outside of the architectural office which would have an equal, if not larger impact on those that undertook the journey upon their return.

Chapter 4 follow the influence that this trip had on the development of architecture culture in Western Australia once they travelers returned home. Chapter 4.1 presents an account of The Shiralee Coffee House. Opened in 1956 by returning travelers Lex and Barbara Hill, this was a coffee shop directly modeled on the London typology and soon became the centre of a vibrant architectural discourse which was developing in Perth. Chapter 4.2 looks at the editorship of John Duncan, John White, and Lex Hill as they took over the local Institute journal, *The Architect,* shortly

after they returned home. Chapter 4.3 follows three of the returning travelers as they commenced their architectural careers in Perth and describes how their experiences during the working holiday directly shaped their practice.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the thesis. It provides an overview of the working holiday as it continued to develop into the 1960s and identifies the main outcomes from the research. It considers the methodological potential of the study for future research projects and outlines the contribution that this study has made to the field of architectural history both globally and in Australia.

Chapter 2 Setting the Scene

The first section of this thesis describes the origin of the working holiday, both as a historical concept, but also within the specific Western Australian context. It provides an introduction to the topic, alongside a framework and methodology that provides the tools to examine the movement. It sets out a literature review and a methodological framework, and examines the current historiographical understanding of the working holiday. It also provides a history of the working holiday as it emerged in the 1930s, which set the scene for developments in the postwar period. looks at the first group of architects from Western Australia that traveled to the UK for work experience and to further their education. This chapter also introduces the Architectural Students Association of Western Australia which was a student-led organization that would play a pivotal role in the ongoing success of the working holiday as it developed into the immediate postwar years.

Chapter 2.1 Situating Western Australia and the Working Holiday: A Literature Review.

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the topic and a literature review which situate the research and the thesis investigations. It begins with an introduction to the case study, Western Australia, and the architectural profession there. In particular, it focuses on the close relationship with Britain that has influenced much of the local cultural discourse within the state. It then examines the idea of the working holiday and its peripheral position within Australian architectural historiography. In part, this literature review identifies the research gap that this thesis intends to fill. It also provides a context for how the trip has been perceived and positioned within the profession. It concludes by producing a definition of the working holiday. Informed by the literature review, this definition is essential to the framing of the research project, and the identification of criteria through which to view it.

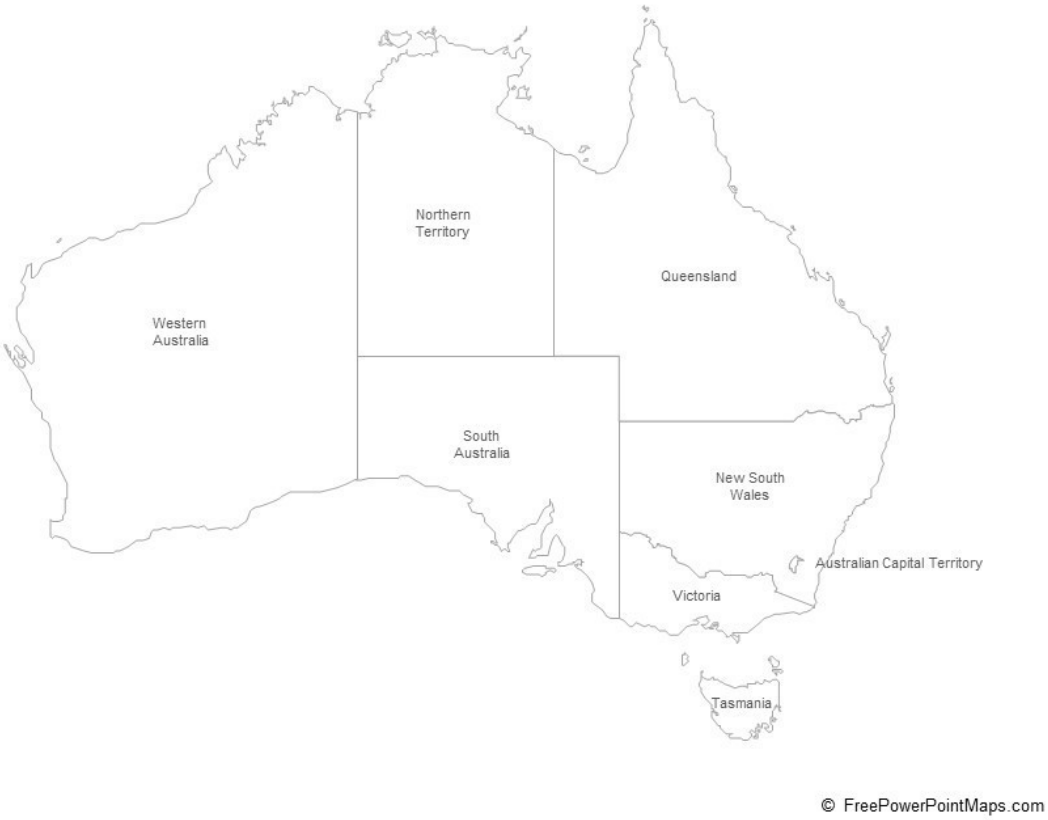

Fig 2.1 Map of Australia

Fig 2.2 Map of Western Australia

2.1.2 Introduction to the Case Study: Western Australia

Key to examining the working holiday to the United Kingdom as taken by architectural graduates in Western Australia is an understanding of the relationship between Britain and Australia. This is a relationship which has been formally in place since the British invasion of Noongar Boodjar and the violent dispossession of the local First Nations peoples from their land in 1829.

Western Australia is the largest state in Australia and has been occupied by its First Nations people for more than 46,000 years. In the almost 200 years of British occupation of the land, the state has grown in fits and bursts, with an economy closely linked to the cyclical fortunes of the mining industry. Until the 1950s the state largely struggled to find a period of continuous and solid growth, and its history was punctuated by a series of mineral resource booms and crashes. By 1954, the middle of the period that this thesis focuses upon, Perth was the third smallest capital city in Australia, with a population of almost 349,000. Only Hobart and Darwin were smaller.[12] While small, this was a turning point for the state, and during the 1950s Perth witnessed the fastest metropolitan population growth in the country, growing by more than 20 percent in the previous decade.[13]

It is difficult to convey how vast Western Australia is, and how truly remote its capital city Perth, located in the far south-west corner of the state, is. This geographical reality and the perceived isolation of its inhabitants has coloured almost every aspect of life in the state since British occupation.[14] By size, Western Australia takes up almost a third of Australia's total landmass, and at more than 2 million square kilometres is the second largest country state subdivision in the world. As of 2020, the state has a population of 2.6 million people, with 80% living in Perth. It is often described as the most isolated capital city in the world, with the nearest city of more than 100,000 people being Adelaide which is over 2,500 km away. Indeed, the cities of Dili and Jakarta are closer than either Melbourne or Sydney.[15]

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[12] Jenny Gregory, *City of Light: A history of Perth since the 1950s* (Perth: City of Perth, 2003), 38. It is important to note that this number does not include the population of First Nations peoples, who were not counted in the census until 1971.
[13] Gregory, *City of Light*, 38.
[14] Charlie Fox, "Isolation," in *The Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia,* eds. Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (Crawley: UWA Press, 2009), 493-394.
[15] Nicholas Gill, "Where the world's most remote city?" *The Guardian,* August 19, 2015.

An example of the vast size and isolation of the state are typically illustrated through its physical connection to the rest of Australia by both rail and road networks. Separated from Adelaide by the expansive and barren landscape of the Nullarbor Plain, for the first 90 years of occupation the only way to reach the eastern states was by boat across the Great Australian Bight, which was a slow and dangerous passage. The first rail connection to the eastern states was started in 1917.[16] The journey from Perth to Melbourne by train then took 4 days, 4 breaks of gauge, and five train changes, and it was not until 1970 that the line was replaced by a standard gauge and a single train.[17] A contemporary newspaper report celebrating the opening of the first leg of this railway makes clear what an achievement this connection was:

> The opening of the East-West railway marks the commencement of a new era in Australian history… [it] has drawn together the two ends of Australia and made Australia a continent in a sense that has never been true before… It has added to Australia a quarter of a million square miles of territory, practically untrodden by the foot of white man.[18]

[16] Geoffrey Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia Since 1826* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2008), 103.
[17] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 138.
[18] "Map showing the route of the transcontinental railway line from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie," *Bendigonian,* December 6, 1917, 29.

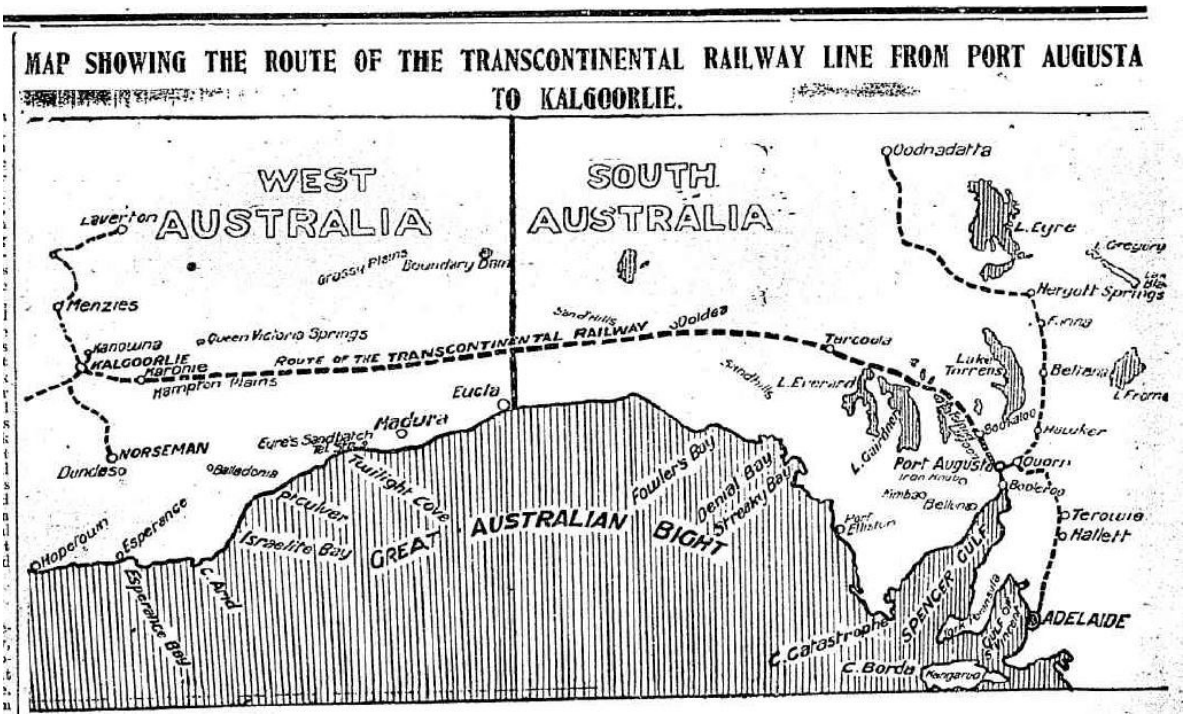

Fig 2.3 "Map showing the Route of the Transcontinental Railway Line from Port August to Kalgoorlie." *The Bendigonian,* December 6, 1919, 27.

Driving was equally challenging. The Eyre Highway, which linked Perth and Adelaide through the Plain, was a project which began in the 1940s and the road was only sealed in 1976.[19] This meant that for much of the twentieth century, a journey from Perth to the Eastern States took at least three days, either by boat, car, or train.

A result of this clear and present physical separation from the economic and political centre of the country meant that Western Australia developed an identity and culture shaped by an anxiety over this distance from the east, an interiority, and a desire to maintain strong ties with Britain. Leading WA historian Geoffrey Bolton clearly articulates this mentality, claiming: "Isolation has fed a number of Western Australian attitudes and stereotypes. With a coastline too long for realistic defence and a small and unevenly distributed population, Western Australians understandably fear invaders who might move in on them as they moved in on their Aboriginal predecessors."[20] Charlie Fox echoes this sentiment, writing: "From the beginning of European settlement, Western

[19] Fox, "Isolation," 494.
[20] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 2.

Australians have made much of their isolation…While some boast that isolation has bred a pioneering spirit, others point to insularity and a suspicion of outsiders. Isolation has engendered a sense of distinctiveness and a concomitant resentment".[21]

This defensive attitude, combined with the very real physical isolation is evident in the mentality of Western Australia as it developed over the twentieth century. Indeed, independence and separateness from Australia has been a long-standing motif in the state's culture and continues to feed the prominence of the isolationist narrative. A referendum to secede was held in 1933, and although unsuccessful, the seeds of the idea have cast a long shadow. This was again made visible during the 2019 pandemic as the state notoriously maintained a hard border with the country for more than two years in which it was described as 'the hermit kingdom' for its refusal to join the national pandemic plan.[22]

One aspect of this separation has meant that a close relationship with Great Britain has persisted and remains amongst the strongest in the country. This was a relationship fostered through a number of key initiatives, but which greatly accelerated during the two World Wars. Following the end of World War I, Bolton notes "the war may have fostered among many Western Australians a tendency to identify more closely with the Mother Country than with the wayward Eastern States."[23] The period between Federation in 1901 and the beginning of World War II was a tumultuous time across the country, punctuated by the sweeping depression of the 1930s. Bolton argues that this period in particular led to the construction of a particular Western Australian cultural position, which looked specifically to Britain over the rest of Australia. Partly, he suggests this was a response to Western Australians' perceived exclusion from national policies. One example Bolton cites was the increasing levels of tariff protection for the manufacturing industry in the eastern states, which left out a production based state like WA.[24] This meant, as Bolton writes, that "In a time of stress the isolated Western Australia of the 1930s could identify readily with the British Empire as with the Australian Commonwealth."[25] As resentment towards the east grew, it left Western Australians turning to Britain for support, a natural inclination for a state that

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[21] Fox, "Isolation," 493.
[22] Rebecca Trigger, "Is the Sun Finally Setting on Australia's 'Hermit Kingdom'?" *ABC News online,* accessed 24 May, 2022. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-24/wa-border-opening-delayed-but-for-how-much-longer/100737778
[23] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 103.
[24] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 124.
[25] Geoffrey Bolton, *A Fine Country To Starve In* (Nedlands: UWA Press, 1994), xv.

many people still thought of "as a suburb of the great British Empire."[26] Bolton submits further evidence such as the late acceptance of British convict labor – the last in the colony; the highest recruitment rate for the formation of the Australian Imperial Forces in 1914; and the highest 'yes' vote for conscription of any state; as all contributing to this relationship.[27]This relationship was then strengthened in the years following World War II during the immigration boom, which saw Western Australia consistently take in large numbers of British migrants, at a rate well above the national average, and at its peak taking in almost a quarter of all arriving British immigrants that settled in Australia.[28]

Historian Reginald Appleyard in his careful account of British migration in Western Australia, further outlines a group of policies which were implemented almost continuously in Western Australia since settlement, leading to a society "whose language, patriotism, politics, and institutions were basically British."[29] His account shows how in the period since settlement, a series of racially motivated schemes created a condition which would persist well into the late twentieth century, and would provide the conditions for a predominantly British society and cultural foundation to persist, working in concert with those feelings of anxiety and isolation from the eastern states as outlined above. Policies like the 1886 Goldfields Act of Western Australia, sought to explicitly exclude any 'Asiatic Alien' from working directly in the newly opened goldfields of Western Australia.[30] Coupled with other similar acts, this resulted in the state having a remarkably small comparative population of Chinese people and 'others' at the time of Federation.[31] As described by Appleyard, this meant that by Federation "the predominantly British base of Western Australia's population had not been eroded to any meaningful extent by the demographic watershed of the gold rushes."[32] This was a pattern that would continue well

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[26] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 102.
[27] Bolton, *Land of Vision and Mirage*, 103.
[28] Reginald Appleyard and Loretta Baldassar, "Introduction: Peopling Western Australia," in *A Changing People: Diverse contributions to the state of Western Australia*, ed. Raelene Wilding and Farida Tilbury (Perth: Office of Multicultural Interests, 2004), 9; James Jupp, *The English in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 146.
[29] Reginal Appleyard, "The Anglo-Australian Foundation" in *A Changing People: Diverse contributions to the state of Western Australia*, ed. Raelene Wilding and Farida Tilbury (Perth: Office of Multicultural Interests, 2004), 34.
[30] Christine Choo, "Chinese-Indigenous Australian Connections" in *A Changing People: Diverse contributions to the state of Western Australia*, ed. Raelene Wilding and Farida Tilbury (Perth: Office of Multicultural Interests, 2004), 112.
[31] Appleyard, "The Anglo-Australian Foundation," 41.
[32] Appleyard, The Anglo-Australian Foundation," 42.

into the present period and today remains the state with the highest percentage of British born people.[33]

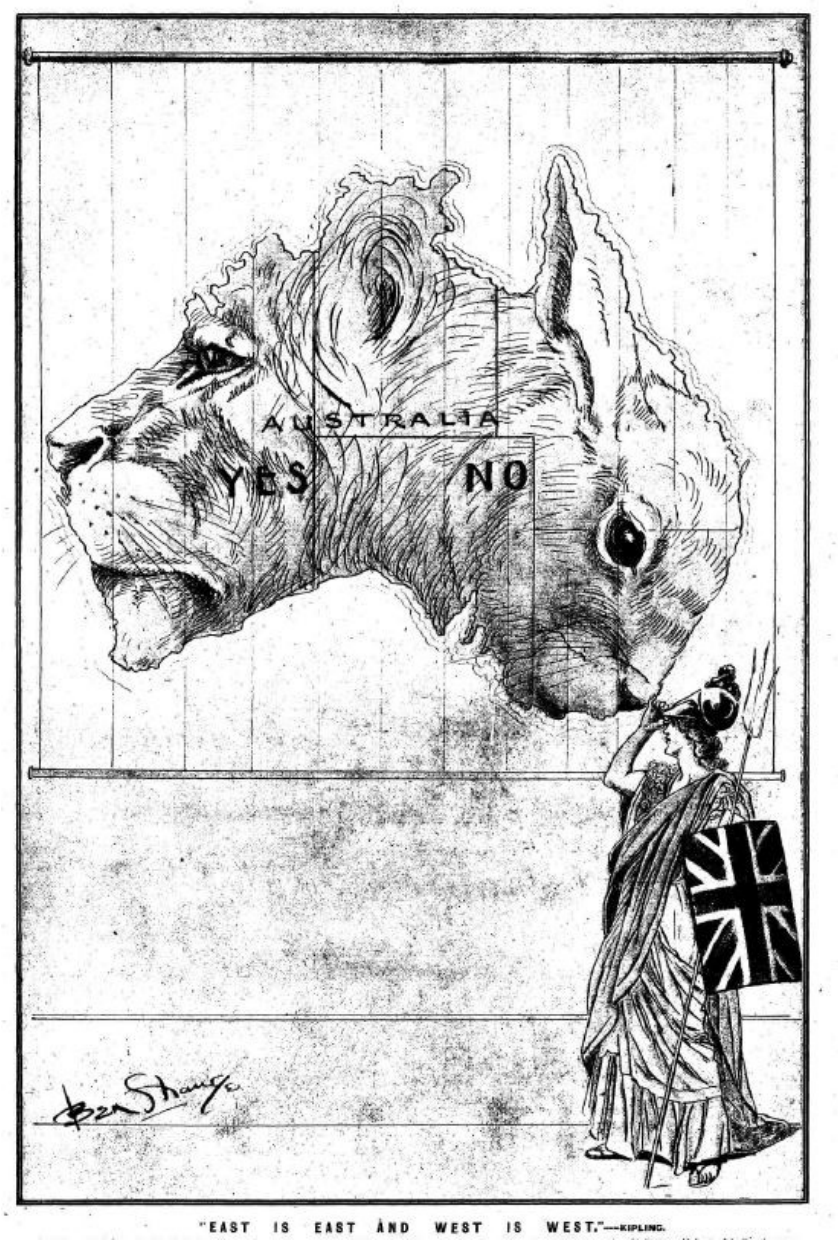

Fig 2.4 'East is East and West is West.' Cartoon by Ben Strange. *Western Mail*, January 4, 1918, 26.

[33] As of the 2021 Census. "Australian Bureau of Statistics." Accessed 19 August, 2022. https://www.abs.gov.au/

2.1.3 British Connections in Art and Architecture in Western Australia.

Western Australia's enduring relationship with Britain has had a number of flow-on effects, not least in the shaping of the local culture, particularly in the postwar years. This has been well documented in the visual art world, and a relationship with Britain has long characterized the work produced in the state. The critic and former director of the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, John Barrett-Lennard, makes this link clear in an essay on the work of Perth artist Jeremy Kirwan-Ward. He writes:

> For artists like Kirwan-Ward studying in Perth in the 1960s (and for others decades before and after) their focus was on London, and their education substantially based on and around British models. In Melbourne and Sydney in 1967, as he entered his art studies in Perth, there was intensifying debate about modernist abstraction and its links to New York, but if such discussions occurred here they were demonstrably secondary. Artists in Western Australia were not looking first to the United States but to England. All the senior teachers in the art schools came from the United Kingdom or went there for their own education… The British connection, just like British immigration, remained strong and important, indeed arguably determining, for longer and more intensely in Western Australia than anywhere else in the country.[34]

As Barrett-Lennard makes clear this was a significant and long-lasting relationship and the British connection has remained a central theme in much of the fine art production and discourse within the state.[35] This relationship has also been identified as central to the architectural profession. It was first highlighted by Max Freeland in his national history of the profession, published in 1971, where he describes the origins of the Western Australian settlement.

> For over sixty years, while the colonies in the east of Australia grew and expanded in the fits and starts of succeeding booms and depressions, the colony begun in 1829 on the Swan River remained stunted and poor, unable to wrench enough

[34] John Barrett-Lennard, "On Edge: Jeremy Kirwan-Ward's Painting and the West," in *Jeremy Kirwan-Ward: You Can See it from Here* (Perth: Art Collective WA, 2017), 31.

[35] This connection is also keenly noted in the writing of art critic and historian Dorothy Erickson, who has suggested this strong British connection is one of the major differences between the art produced in WA and the eastern states. See: Dorothy Erickson, *Inspired by Light and Land: Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1829-1969* (Welshpool: Western Australia Museum, 2015).

> surplus from its barren land to rise beyond a subsistence level of existence. Because of the historical circumstances of its founding and fifteen hundred miles of impassable Nullarbor Plain, Western Australia was linked strongly with the United Kingdom but hardly at all with the other colonies on the Australian continent. People in Perth had far more contact with the British in India than with their fellow Australians in Melbourne or Sydney. Perth's gaze was fixed to the north-west and seldom strayed over its shoulder to the eastward.[36]

While clearly taking some liberties in his description, this bifurcation of the country along the longest state line, the east in dialogue with each other and the west looking the other way, was obviously a well-known and recognizable trope by this stage. Freeland goes on to further demonstrate this distinct gaze:

> When the die was cast and the RAIA [Royal Australian Institute of Architects] was formed the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia refused to join and went its own way. Left to its own devices, the RIAWA tried to strengthen its chances of survival by spinning other lines to England. In 1932, for instance, it accepted the offer of the RIBA to award a bronze medal for the best street architecture in Western Australia.[37]

Following the broad generalisations of Freeland, the relationship with Britain and the architectural profession was further explored by a series of local scholars and has since been cast as central to the state's architectural narrative. These links stem primarily from a series of articles, unpublished essays, and talks given by Western Australian academic Duncan Richards in the early 1980s, which set out to establish an alternative source for modernism. He writes:

> Why the architectural situation in Western Australia should differ from other places, even within Australia, cannot be dealt with in any detail here except to suggest that significant amongst several influencing factors was the importance of the various professional and personal contacts established between architects in Western Australia and Great Britain during the post-war years which ensured that the introduction of the ideas of modernism came by way of the English variant of

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[36] J.M. Freeland, *The Making of a Profession: A History of the Growth and Work of the Architectural Institute in Australia* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971), 116.
[37] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 123.

> modernist thought rather than the more radical and ideologically oriented European architectural philosophies that were influential, either directly or via the United States, in shaping modernist architectural thought in the eastern states of Australia.[38]

Richards however did not pursue this hypothesis in detail.[39] Instead it was instead taken up in a series of texts written by leading Western Australian academics Simon Anderson and Geoffrey London throughout the early 1990s.[40] With these texts Anderson and London conflate two related but distinct ideas, which have led to a somewhat mythologised view of Western Australian practice and its putative British connections. Anderson and London equated a close relationship between the UK and WA with what they describe as an 'independence of endeavour' from the east coast of Australia.[41] This places London and Anderson's work within a series of national debates that unfolded during the early 1990s which staked out claims for regional independence, rather than an exploration of ideological origins as set out by Richards. This left the claim for the British connection widely understood, but unsubstantiated. Several years later London would self-reflexively respond to this, asking: "Are these views any more than a parochial claim by Western Australian historians for a degree of cultural independence from the rest of Australia?"[42] This leaves Richards's original hypothesis largely unresolved.

2.1.4 Western Australian Literature

The twentieth century architectural history of Western Australia is contained within a small body of scholarship. The key text remains *Western Towns and Buildings,* an edited volume produced by Margaret Pitt-Morison and John White for the state's sesquicentenary celebrations. Together with

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[38] Duncan Richards, "The Acceptance of Modern Architecture in WA: The Architectural Competition for the Empire Games Village, City Beach 1961," In *Fading Events and Places: The Architecture of the VIIth British Empire and Commonwealth Games Village and Perry Lakes Stadium,* eds. Hannah Lewi and Stephen Neille (Perth: Department of Architecture, Curtin University of Technology, 2003), 13.

[39] Richards expressed this view in two key papers: Richards, "The Acceptance of Modern Architecture," 12-17; and the unpublished essay Duncan Richards, "Sources of Modernism: The Development of Modern Architecture in Western Australia 1939-1969," unpublished essay, 1982. Richards Writing Collection, Curtin University.

[40] See: Simon Anderson and Geoffrey London, "The Western Edge," *Architecture Australia* 79, no. 4 (1990): 48; Geoffrey London, "Modern Houses," in *Modern Houses: Architect-Designed Houses in Western Australia from 1950-1960*, eds. Geoffrey London and Duncan Richards (Nedlands: School of Architecture and Fine Arts, The University of Western Australia, 1997), 3.

[41] Anderson and London, "The Western Edge," 48.

[42] London, "Modern Houses," 3.

High Hopes: The Institutes of Architecture of Western Australia by Duncan Richards, they provide the leading survey texts for the state's architectural history since British occupation.[43] These are supported by monographs on individual firms, and a series of smaller publications which have largely taken the form of exhibition catalogues that focus on a single practice or specific events.[44]

Within the small handful of publications, catalogues and exhibitions which have focused on twentieth century architecture in Western Australian, a connection with the UK is a noticeable presence. Key examples include the small monograph on AA trained British immigrant Jeffrey Howlett, and Duncan Richards and Martyn Hooks' exploration of the steel framed houses of the progressive Western Australian practice, Hawkins and Sands, which was staffed by many architects that had emigrated from Britain.[45] Adding to the British presence is a body of adjacent literature which looks at several high-profile British planners who worked extensively in WA, including Gordon Stephenson, Paul Ritter and Roger Johnson. [46]

In many ways, this small, but influential body of scholarship has come to be seen as almost an 'essentialising discourse' in Western Australian architecture, functioning in much the same way as climate does in Queensland architecture: while having a kernel of truth, it is presented and disseminated in a way which obfuscates other readings.[47] I was a student of the architecture school at the University of Western Australia in the early 2000s and this British presence was, at least subjectively, clearly visible. Two of the higher profile architects in the state, Peter Parkinson and Jeffrey Howlett were British having both studied at the AA and emigrated in the early 1950s,

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[43] John White and Margaret Pitt-Morison, eds. *Western Town and Buildings* (Nedlands: UWA Press, 1979); Duncan Richards, *High Hopes: The Institutes of Architecture of Western Australia* (Perth: RAIA WA Chapter, 2003); Another important text is: Ian Molyneux, *Looking Around Perth: A Guide to the Architecture of Perth and Surrounding Towns* (East Fremantle: Wescolour Press, 1981).

[44] Examples include: Simon Anderson, Jody McLean, and Kelly Rippingale, eds. *Public Works: P.W.D. W.A. Architectural Division 1941-1963* (Perth: BMA, 1993); Simon Anderson and Meghan Nordeck, eds. *Krantz and Sheldon: Architectural Projects* (Nedlands: School of Architecture, UWA, 1996); Andrew Murray and Simon Anderson, eds. *Brian Klopper: Architectural Projects* (Nedlands: School of Architecture, UWA, 2012).

[45] P. Brew and M. Markham, eds. *Jeffrey Howlett: Architectural Projects* (Nedlands: School of Architecture, UWA, 1992); Martyn Hook and Duncan Richards, *The Experimental Steel Framed Houses of F.G.B. Hawkins and Desmond Sands Architects* (South Bentley, WA: Curtin University Centre for Architecture and Planning Research, 1993).

[46] See: Jenny Gregory and David L.A. Gordon, eds. "Special Issue on Gordon Stephenson," *Town Planning Review,* 83, no. 3 (2012); Gordon Stephenson, *On a Human Scale: A Life in City Design* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1992), 182; Geraint Franklin and David Nichols, "Hans Cooper and Paul Ritter: Tactile Environments for Children in Postwar Britain and Australia," in *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy,* eds. Kate Darian-Smith and Julie Willis (London: Routledge, 2016).

[47] For a discussion on the idea of essentializing discourse see: Paul Walker, "Hot Modernism," *Architecture Australia* (Mar/Apr 2016): 104

and had some of the few local catalogues and exhibitions dedicated to their work.[48] The pedigree of local modern cult figures like Desmond Sands, who had worked for almost a decade in the UK with Joseph Emberton in the 1940s was well known, and many of the teaching staff similarly were AA trained, including British migrants, like my third year master Parkinson, or had sought out training there.[49] Whilst anecdotal, certainly to me and my peers, this British connection, as first raised by Richards, was evident on the ground.

But while it may have been part of the lived experience within the architectural school, as briefly shown above there has been little in the scholarship to date which has examined how this relationship with Britain played out - either in Perth or in Britain. In one sense then, this thesis sets out to test the hypothesis put forward by Duncan Richards several years ago. But rather than examining the ideological origins of the profession, and their British roots, this thesis argues that it was the relationship itself that was most significant to the profession. It was the actual relationship between the two countries which enabled the working holiday to occur. A relationship with Britain, be it overstated, mythologized, or accurate, was significant for the architectural community in Western Australia as it opened up the possibility for easy travel and the ability to gain overseas work experience given the reciprocal relationship in place as a member of the Commonwealth realm.

2.1.5 The Working Holiday in Australia and New Zealand.

> Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas… the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity.[50]

The idea of the working holiday and an evaluation of its current position within architectural historiography requires examination. The working holiday can be understood as a subsection of travel, a concept which, within architectural historiography, has long been cast as a crucial and formative part of practice. As Said notes in the quote above, the idea of travel, and the circulation

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[48] Ian Kelly, curator, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture* (Perth: York Theatre Festival, 1987); Brew and Markham, *Jeffrey Howlett.*

[49] See for example: Hook and Richards, *Experimental Steel Framed Houses.* At the time of my education at the University of Western Australia there were at least 7 AA trained staff members, 4 of them originally from Britain. This AA connection is further articulated in: Anderson and London, "The Western Edge," 48.

[50] Said, "Travelling Theory," 226.

of ideas, has been an essential part of understanding the development of intellectual ideas across the globe. From the grand tour of the 17th Century to journeys by modern architects to the Mediterranean basin, the importance of travel for the growth and personal development of an architect has been long established. As Jilly Traganou notes in the foreword to her edited collection *Travel, Space, Architecture:* "Pure exploratory travelling, outside of professional obligations, has often been described as the highlight of an architect's career, a means of acquiring deep and critical knowledge by obtaining 'authentic' first-hand experience of the beaten and unbeaten tracks throughout the globe."[51] Architects including Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn, undertook well documented journeys through places like the Mediterranean, following a kind of modern version of the Grand Tour. These were journeys of self-exploration and discovery that have become central to the mythology of their practice.[52] The act of travel provided both firsthand access to architectural wonders otherwise only seen in books or paintings, but also exposed architects to the variety and vast catalogue of structures that had yet to catalogued or documented. The physical act of travelling provided inspiration, enlightenment, and exposure to a world beyond existing knowledge. The editors of a recent special issue of *Architectural Histories* dedicated to 'Travels in Architectural History' articulates the close relationship that travel and the profession have enjoyed: "Travel has long been a part of the architect's formation… [and] has also been an integral part of the architect's profession."[53] The editors go on to argue for an expanded understanding of the effects of travel within the profession, going beyond the idea of the Grand Tour. They suggest "the complex relationship between architectural work and travel experience has not been sufficiently probed by historians."[54] This special issue, alongside volumes like *Architects' Journeys: Building, Travelling, Thinking* and a growing list of journal articles, has seen a renewed focus on travel exploring its many dimensions and facets particularly as the study of architectural networks and globalization takes hold.[55] While this recent raft of scholarship on

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[51] Jilly Traganou, "For a theory of travel in Architectural Studies," in *Travel, Space, Architecture,* eds. Jilly Traganou and Miodrag Mitrasinovic (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 11.
[52] See: Le Corbusier, *Journey to the East,* edited and annotated by Ivan Zaknic, translated by Ivan Zaknic, John Gery and Nicole Pertuiset (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007); Eugene Johnson, *Drawn from the Source: The Travel Sketches of Louis I. Kahn* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).
[53] Davide Deriu, Edoardo Piccoli, and Belgin Turan Ozkaya, "Travels in Architectural History," *Architectural Histories* 4, no. 1 (2016): 2.
[54] Deriu, Piccoli, Ozkaya, "Travels in Architectural History," 2.
[55] These include: Craig Buckley and Pollyanna Rhee, *Architects' Journeys: Building, Travelling, Thinking* (New York: GSAPP Books, 2011); Ipek Mehmetoglu, "Les Girls en Voyage: Gender and Architecture in the Travels of Mary Imrie and Jean Wallbridge," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada,* 44, no. 1

architectural travel has considerably broadened the understanding of travel and its relationship to architectural practice, it remains tethered to the idea of travel as an act of sightseeing, and the personal revelations which arise from this movement. To date, there has been little research that looks at a specific sub-type of architectural travel and the focus of this thesis, the working holiday. Rather than sightseeing or travelling for work, this was a trip where the primary intention was to spend a period of time away from home living and working – to be totally immersed in a new environment.

2.1.6 Identifying the Working Holidays in Literature

This thesis argues that the working holiday, as will be outlined here, is a phenomenon that occurred almost exclusively in Australasia, and one that was rarely seen elsewhere even in other Commonwealth countries with settler colonial structures. It is this specificity which partly explains its absence in travel scholarship. The working holiday to the UK was a widely experienced phenomenon across the twentieth century in Australia and New Zealand across all vocations and social groups. Historian Graeme Davison describes the broad importance of the trip: "Living in England, especially in London, has become firmly inscribed in Australian consciousness as a rite of passage, and a gateway to personal liberation."[56] Yet despite this, the working holiday of the postwar period has received little scholarly attention in Australia across all disciplines including architecture.[57] It thus occupies a peculiar position in the historiography in that while largely undocumented, it is not an unknown phenomenon. Rather it is a frequently cited and well-known occurrence, described across a range of popular literature, particularly novels, and a journey that has been widely personally experienced.[58] Tracking the way in which the journey has been recorded and the frequency with which it appears within architectural history is revealing and

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(2019): 7-20; Chen-Yu Chiu, "China Receives Utzon: The Role of Jorn Utzon's 1958 Study Trip to China in His Architectural Maturity," *Architectural Histories,* 4, no. 1 (2016): 1-25.

[56] Graeme Davison, "Tourists, Expats and Invisible Immigrants: Being Australian in England in the 1960s and 70s," in *Australian in Britain: The Twentieth-Century Experience* eds. Carl Bridge, Robert Crawford, and David Dunstan (Melbourne: Monash University ePress, 2009), n.p, https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/monograph/Australians_in_Britain_The_Twentieth-Century_Experience/12821246

[57] There has been a small body of recent work that has examined the architectural travels in Australia before 1940. Key examples include: Julie Willis and Katti Williams, "Travel a la Mode: Australian Architects and the Changing Nature of the International Tour," *Fabrications* 31, no. 3(2021): 357-397; Julie Willis, "Architectural Movements: Journeys of an Inter-colonial Profession," *Fabrications* 26, no. 2 (2016): 158-179.

[58] Living and working in the UK is a common motif in Australian and NZ novels, see: Elizabeth Harrower, *The Catherine Wheel* (London: Cassell, 1960); Janet Frame, *The Envoy from Mirror City* (London: Women's Press, 1985); Louise Mack, *An Australian Girl in London* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902).

goes some way to explain its absence from the discourse and the peculiar position it has occupied to date.

David Saunders wrote that Australian architects have always been "prone to travel"[59] and evidence of the working holiday appears dotted across the discipline's key histories from the twentieth century. Seminal texts like Jennifer Taylor's *An Australian Identity: Houses for Sydney 1953-63* makes numerous mentions of these trips but provides no details. Instead, such a practice establishes a perception of the trip as so common as to be invisible. Typical of this detail is found in Taylor's description of Bryce Mortlock, where she writes "In 1951 Mortlock left Australia to spend some time in England".[60] Regarding Bruce Rickard, a footnote clarifies "In 1954, shortly after graduation from the East Sydney Technical College, Rickard travelled to Europe, and later acquired the Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania".[61] Taylor's later and more expansive text *Australian Architecture since 1960* further piled up the mentions of these trips abroad as she notes that for graduate students in the 1960s that "the mecca was still England," and identifies a new found idealism and "social zeal" in Sydney practice, which she suggests came largely from working in Britain and encountering places like the London County Council (LCC).[62] Given the survey account of the book and the emphasis on local building practice, there was precious little space to develop these observations further. But the mentions that constantly pepper texts like Taylor's continued to grow and formed a backdrop which painted the trip as inevitable. As more generous monographs on individual architects were released there became room for the details of these trips to be elaborated upon. This is perhaps best illustrated in Philip Drew's pioneering monograph on Glenn Murcutt, *Leaves of Iron,* where Drew casts Murcutt's first trip overseas following graduation, taken in 1962, as a formative moment in his career. Drew dedicates a significant portion of the book to this first journey, along with detailing future travels. Murcutt and his wife Helen Kay lived and worked in London for two years before travelling widely. Which Drew describes, "For much of the time in England Glenn Murcutt worked in the office of Ian Fraser and Associates with Tony Gough and Bob Paterson, but, in addition to the two major trips to Greece and the Mediterranean in in 1963, and to Poland and Scandinavia in

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[59] David Saunders, "… So I Decided To Go Overseas," *Architecture Australia* (February/March 1977), 22. See also: Willis and Williams, "Travel a la Mode."
[60] Jennifer Taylor, *An Australian Identity: Houses for Sydney 1953-63* (Sydney: Dept. of Architecture, University of Sydney, 1984), 31.
[61] Taylor, *An Australian Identity*, 38.
[62] Taylor, *An Australian Identity*, 38.

1964, there were many minor excursions to the Cotswolds and provincial cities in England, and to Paris to escape from London."[63] Drew goes on to highlight the importance of these trips to the continent, particularly to Mykonos, but the comparatively lengthy period working in London is recorded only in that brief note, passed over in favour of the more revelatory trips to the Mediterranean where Murcutt became "convinced by the integrity of architectural form".[64] Murcutt is portrayed by Drew as continuing the tradition of the masters of modern architecture who set out to discover the power of the Mediterranean and vernacular building traditions. He frames these journeys as providing an epistemological break in which inspiration and architectural development can occur. Drew, following a global narrative, set the tone for how travel and the working holiday would continue to be framed in Australian architectural history. The romance of the grand tour and the powerful revelations that are experienced in places like the Mediterranean are no doubt significant, but it has meant that the importance, or the possibility of importance, of the working holiday has been considerably diminished. This, of course, is the product of working within a global history framework, and the need to highlight events which accord with a more consistent global narrative.

Drew's account of Murcutt's travel however provides a useful point to clarify an important aspect of the trip, and a central argument of the thesis. Drew separates out working and travelling as two distinct experiences, but this thesis suggests that it is essential to view the working holiday, and all that it encompassed, as a single overarching phenomena. This includes travelling to and from the destination, the work, the social life, holidays and architectural pilgrimages along the way. The thesis argues that they are all constituent parts of a singular event that cannot be separated out from each other. The point of the working holiday, and what largely distinguishes it from other travels or encounters, is its length and the attendant perspective on home this affords. It was a period of immersion in another culture where one could slowly absorb, process, and reconfigure their relationship with themselves, their home, and their place within the world. The two aspects of working and holiday also maintained an important relationship, each aspect enabling, and fueling the other in a kind of loop. In order for Murcutt to experience the revelations of the Mediterranean he relied upon his wage drawn in London. Living and working in the UK provided him and his wife Helen with easy and repeated access to Europe - an impossibility for those that

[63] Philip Drew, *Leaves of Iron: Glenn Murcutt, Pioneer of an Australian Architectural Form* (Sydney: Law Book Company, 1985), 17.
[64] Drew, *Leaves of Iron*, 18.

remained in Australia, or reserved for those wealthy enough to frequently travel abroad. The things that were seen abroad could be discussed in the offices back in London, and filtered through conversations had in the offices. The two aspects are indelibly linked.

2.1.7 The Role of Biography

With a growing interest in the biographical details of architects, paired with an awareness of the globalized movement of the profession, further details of working holidays have begun to emerge within the historiography.[65] In part this has been due to the rise of carefully recounted biographical accounts in which the formative years of education, travel, and early practice have been identified as significant factors in the development of an architectural career. But it is also a result of the expansion of sources and tools through which these histories are produced. In particular an interest in conducting oral histories and increased availability of personal archival material has meant these more personal and intimate stories have been made available to researchers. This has allowed more personal and private aspects of architectural practice to be addressed, to which the working holiday certainly belongs.

Central to this shift was the 2012 release of the *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* which placed an emphasis on providing detailed biographical listings for a broad range of architects from across the country.[66] Within these biographical sketches, previously unknown or siloed accounts of working holidays emerged and the various practices worked at, exhibitions visited, and travel itineraries were recorded for the first time. The availability of the data in this format might be said to have prompted a re-evaluation of the trip in the years since. Most directly emerging from the *Encyclopedia* was Philip Goad's 2015 article "Bringing it all Home: Robin Boyd and Australia's Embrace of Brutalism, 1955-71" in which he laid out the significance of this experience abroad and provides a starting framework for how these trips might be understood in terms of local practice. Building on from these newly revealed details in the *Encyclopedia*, Goad observes the "well-trodden path to England" and notes that "From the early 1950s until the mid-1960s, numbers of young Australian graduate architects worked across a network of British offices…On returning

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[65] See: Karen Burns and Lori Brown, "Telling Transnational Histories of Women in Architecture, 1960-2015," *Architectural Histories* 8, no. 1 (2020): 1-11; and Willis, "Architectural Movements: Journeys of an Inter-colonial Profession," for further information on the twin turn of biography and globalization or transnational histories.

[66] Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds. *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

home, these architects translated their office and travel experiences to an Australian setting."[67] While not exactly about the working holiday, Lee Stickells's recent paper "Journeys with the Autonomous House," which follows the travels of Sydney student Tone Wheeler across the US and UK, provides a useful analysis of the potential impact and translation of extended architectural travel within the Antipodean setting.[68]

At the same time as the *Encyclopedia* project was in production, the expansive oral history project 'Hot Modernism', and the resultant Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture was being developed.[69] This project recorded the life stories and careers of a large number of Queensland architects, and it captured the periods spent working and travelling in London in considerable detail. The outcomes of this project were documented in the publication of *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture 1945-1975* which provided further information of the working holidays spent in the UK.[70] Accounts of trips such as those taken by Graham Bligh, which had been captured in the oral history project, were then drawn out and synthesized in the book:

> At the end of the 1950s, Graham Bligh joined Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's office in London for two years, an experience he remembered being 'worth more than six years studying architecture'… Following this rewarding experience, he took a three-month tour of Europe by scooter, travelling through France, Northern Italy, Germany, and visiting Alvar Aalto's architecture in Finland, before returning to Brisbane.[71]

Other initiatives have drawn out equally detailed accounts including the 'Architects of South Australia' online database produced by the Architecture Museum at the University of South Australia which produced detailed biographical entries with major sections focused on these trips.[72] In 2009 John Taylor commenced an ongoing project to compile short but detailed

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[67] Philip Goad, "Bringing it all home: Robin Boyd and Australia's Embrace of Brutalism, 1955-71," *Fabrications* 25, no.2 (2015): 189.
[68] Lee Stickells, "Journeys with the Autonomous House," *Fabrications* 27, no.3 (2017): 352-375.
[69] "Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture." Accessed 18 August, 2021. https://qldarch.net/
[70] J. Macarthur et al., eds. *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture, 1945-1975* (London: Artifice Books, 2015).
[71] Siliva Micheli and Andrew Wilson, "International influences in Post-War Queensland: Protagonists, Destinations and Models," in *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture, 1945-1975* J. Macarthur et al., eds. (London: Artifice Books, 2015), 125.
[72] "Architects of South Australia." Accessed 18 August 2021. https://architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/

biographies of architects in Western Australia.[73] In New Zealand a small body of scholarship has made clear the significance and pervasive nature of the trip amongst recently graduated architects. Paul Walker has centred Miles Warren's experience working for the LCC and his time in London as pivotal to the later concerns of his practice Warren and Mahoney, while Julia Gatley's survey of the Group Architects makes careful note their overseas experience, with many of the members having undertaken lengthy working holidays to Britain.[74]

These texts and the various mentions which have accumulated within the literature provide a framework and useful series of reference points with which to engage. They highlight the key firms, institutions, awards and variety of experiences that the graduates encountered and enabled them to travel. This has been further expanded with the boom in self-published monographs and autobiographies of the last decade. These lavishly detailed accounts often written by the architects themselves or their close family - part memoir, part practice history – have further situated the trip abroad as a pivotal and formative experience, and portray it as an essential part of their training and education. While the emphasis is again often on the exploratory journeys through Europe rather than time spent working in offices, the overseas experience typically occupies a large portion of these texts. The significance placed on these journeys by the architects within their memoirs is revealing, as it indicates the gap between the scholarly literature and their importance to those that went. For the architects that undertook these excursions, this was a critically important part of their education, significant and memorable moments of their lives, and it underscores the intensely personal nature of these journeys.[75] A recent monograph on Sydney architect Bruce Rickard, produced by Rickard's family and a team of academics, utilizes the enormous and remarkably intact archive of Rickard to piece together his career.[76] The book includes a lengthy chapter written by Philip Drew on Rickard's working holiday in London. Using the personal diaries and photo collection, Drew provides an in-depth and careful recollection of

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[73] John Taylor, "Western Australian Architect Biographies." Accessed 18 August 2021. https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies.html

[74] Julia Gatley, *Group Architects: Towards a New Zealand Architecture* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010); Paul Walker, "Brutalism in New Zealand Architecture: Miles Warren and the Architectural Image," in *Neo-Avant-Garde and Postmodern: Postwar Architecture in Britain and Beyond*, Mark Crinson and Claire Zimmerman, eds. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Centre for British Art; London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2010), 277-296.

[75] See: Robert Dickson, *Addicted to Architecture* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2010), 54; Neville Gruzman and Philip Goad, *Gruzman: An Architect and His City* (Fishermans Bend, Vic.: Craftsman House, 2006), 269.

[76] Julie Cracknell, Peter Lonergan, and Sam Rickard, eds. *Bruce Rickard: A Life in Architecture* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018).

Rickard's time both working in the UK and travelling throughout the UK, the continent, and later to America, painting this trip as a central to the development of his career.[77]

The prominent positioning of the working holiday in these recent self-published and family produced texts further highlights the significance and meaningful effect it had on the participant despite its relative absence in the historiography. These were intensely personal journeys and were so often bound up in private discoveries and a growing sense of self which has not typically been the stuff of architectural history. Retelling them in detail largely depends on access to private, family archives, which are often difficult to access and sensitive in nature. Without this access there has understandably been a gap between the personal and scholarly treatment of the journey to date, reflected in the most vivid accounts being confined to these self-published volumes.

2.1.8 'Sojourners' and the Working Holiday

While the working holiday is a phenomenon that has only recently been the subject of attention in architectural history, in other Australian literature it has commanded a stronger presence. Much of this is due to the significance of travel generally in antipodean culture. This has meant that travel literature has a long and well-established history in Australia and New Zealand. As historian Richard White has noted, "the impact of outward bound tourism has arguably been one of the decisive factors in transformations in Australian culture through the twentieth century."[78] White goes on to note "Australians are among the world's most travelled peoples…and the figure of the Australian Abroad has long had a resonance in Australian culture."[79] Elsewhere, Juliana De Nooy has noted the significance that these journeys can have on the travelers, through which their "relationship to Australia is thrown into relief by travel, identity cast under the spotlight gaze of the other."[80] Of the places that Australian's have travelled, Britain and in particular, London, has been the predominant focus of scholarly and public attention. This is of course the result of long-held imperial ties and amplified through well-known stories of Australian creative figures who travelled to London to 'make it'. The journeys of Germaine Greer, Barry Humphries and Clive

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[77] Philip Drew, "Drinking from the Fountainhead." In Julie Cracknell, Peter Lonergan, and Sam Rickard eds. *Bruce Rickard: A Life in Architecture* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 87-112.
[78] Richard White, "Time Travel: Australian Tourists and Britain's Past," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies,* 10, no. 1(2013): 1.
[79] White, "Time Travel," 1.
[80] Juliana De Nooy "Australians Abroad: Narrative Paths and Divagations," *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 10, no 1 (2013): 2.

James are well known and well documented, as seen in popular accounts like James' autobiography *Falling Toward England*.[81] A swathe of texts have since been produced which examine the experience of well known 'Australians Abroad' in the postwar period including Stephen Alomes' *When London Calls* and Simon Pierse's *Australian Art and Artists in London, 1950-1965: An Antipodean Summer,* alongside a host of autobiographies and biographies of other well-known travelers, sometimes described as 'sojourners' reflecting their temporary and frequently transitory stays.[82]

"This image/material has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons"

Fig 2.5 Barry McKenzie, played by Barry Crocker. Promotional still for the film "The Adventures of Barry McKenzie" (1972).

[81] Clive James, *Falling Towards England: Unreliable Memoirs Continued* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985).
[82] Stephen Alomes, *When London Calls: The Expatriation of Australian Creative Artists to Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Simon Pierse, *Australian Art and Artists in London, 1950-1965: An Antipodean Summer* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2012). Examples of auto/biographies include: Suzanne Falkiner, *Mick: A life of Randolph Stow* (Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2016) and David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

Recently, a small body of literature has sought to counter these high-profile journeys by profiling the travels of comparatively ordinary Australians on their working holidays.[83] One example can be found in Graeme Davison's chapter 'Tourists, Expats and Invisible Immigrants' in which he provides a careful account of a journey made by two schoolteachers who left Australia to live and work in the UK in the 1960s and 70s. Here, Davison lays out the significance of this trip for the vast group of 'ordinary' Australians that followed along this well-worn path and makes the case for their inclusion in the broader story: "…literary intellectuals [like Greer, James, and Peter Conrad] are less representative of the general experience than the thousands of working holiday-makers who arrived during the 1960s and 70s. These young, usually female, teachers, nurses and office-workers were sometimes sojourners, returning to Australia after a year or two."[84]

Davison's chapter built on the work of Angela Woollacott, whose 2001 book *To Try her fortune in London* was pioneering in its identification of these other, lower profile journeys to London. Woollacott's work, in part, examines "the thousands and thousands of Australians who did not become famous, who went to London for an adventure, to get away from home, to see the world, to pursue education, jobs and careers."[85] Although Woollacott's work still largely focuses on cultural elites including Dorrit Black and Katharine Susannah Prichard, her text identifies, and lays the groundwork for future studies of those 'less visible' visitors. She notes that "large numbers of less visible women also went, taking jobs in music halls or choruses, the food service industry, teaching, nursing, and other less glamorous areas. For such women, the romance, the distance, and the promise of adventure of the metropolis were what mattered. England – and London – held such appeal for Australian women that visits there were often measured in years or could extend indefinitely."[86]

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[83] Other works that examine the travels of ordinary, or professional Australians within the British world include: Tamson Pietsch, "Wandering Scholars? Academic Mobility and the British World, 1850-1940," *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010): 377-387; Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996); Mathew Trinca, "Part of the Pageant: Australians Travelling to London, 1945-1975," PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, 2010.
[84] Davison, "Tourists, Expats and Invisible Immigrants", n.p.
[85] Angela Woollacott, "Australian Women in London: Surveying the Twentieth Century," in *Australian in Britain: The Twentieth-Century Experience* eds. Carl Bridge, Robert Crawford, and David Dunstan (Melbourne: Monash University ePress, 2009), n.p, https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/monograph/Australians_in_Britain_The_Twentieth-Century_Experience/12821246
[86] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 6.

Beyond the possibility of 'making it', Woollacott identified a broader set of motivations and ambitions that underscored these journeys. She notes the role that the journey itself played in the construction of a modern Australian feminine identity, and makes it clear that an ability to go was in itself an act of modernity allowing for "the possibility of personal transformation".[87] But, as Woollacott notes, the ability to live and work in London for an extended period of time was the ultimate aim.

> Going to London was therefore a way for an Australian woman to express and act on her ambition: to advance her education or skills, to absorb the latest styles, genres, research, or techniques, to study under the most renowned practitioners, to gain access to the most respected publishing houses – or simply to get a job.[88]

The ambitions and constraints that Woollacott identifies describe an experience particular to the female protagonists examined in her work. But through her identification of the broader ambitions and experiences of those less visible travelers – those more concerned with gaining experience and adventure rather than 'making it', the work of Woollacott, and later Davison, provides an important framework through which to understand the motivations and trajectories of the architects examined in this thesis. As this thesis will examine, theirs was not a journey to be discovered, or to make a name for themselves, it was a journey of self-discovery - an opportunity to see the world and to gain valuable experience. While careful not to elide the experiences of men and women in London, the ambitions and intention of those architects from Western Australia that made the trip to the UK in the postwar period were clearly aligned within this 'other' kind of trip to London that Woollacott and Davison identify as distinct to those made by artists, musicians and writers. The architects that went were 'ordinary' people complete with modest ambitions but with concomitant modern desires. The architects that went to the UK were part of a much larger group of Australians who sought out the trip as a rite of passage, with a range of diverse but complimentary motivations. They were not inspired by fame or fortune, but an ambition to broaden their horizons, to see the world, to experience something different, and 'for the possibility of personal transformation."[89]

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[87] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 7
[88] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 6.
[89] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 7

2.1.9 Defining the Working Holiday

The working holiday as a concept transcends any specific period of disciplinary field. Combining work and holidays as a means of supporting oneself, forging new connections, and the ability to inhabit new environments for extended periods is a classic trope of the modern age. In this thesis however, the working holiday has a specific meaning and definition. Following the lead of Woollacott and Davison, and drawing on the literature review and original research carried out for this thesis, a definition of the working holiday as experienced by Australian architects can be produced.

The working holiday describes a period of travel taken shortly after receiving an architectural qualification – be it from a diploma course, a university degree, or training as an articled pupil – with the primary purpose of obtaining work experience and or further education over a period of several years before returning home.[90] Typically lasting between one and three years, it is done as part of a loosely associated group of architects, often travelling and living together, and with a set of relaxed ambitions to work, live, and travel while abroad, often in equal measures. It was a phenomenon undertaken by a cohort of people within the same profession and repeated over time by a continually revolving group of closely connected individuals from within the same broader professional community. There was constantly a pool of people getting ready to leave, living together in London, or returning home, over a period spanning multiple decades. Overwhelmingly in the first instance the working holiday was undertaken in the United Kingdom, working either in London or across a number of regional centres, given the ease of entry, good wage, and language compatibility. In the following decades the destinations became increasingly diverse, with students heading to Canada, Japan, and the United States. This model of holiday was first experienced in the 1920s following the cessation of war and the increased access to international travel, but it became widespread in the decades which followed World War II.[91]

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[90] There are exceptions to this rule. A few travelers returned home and did not enter into practice for a variety of reasons including career changes, family commitments, to economic fluctuations. There is also at least one instance of someone deciding to stay in Britain, Patrick Ray Leunig, who travelled to London in 1953, married and then stayed there, only returning to Perth later in life.

[91] The precise origins of the working holiday as it occurred in Western Australia in the 1920s are addressed in Chapter 2.3.

The working holiday was largely seen as a transition phase – it offered a clear break between study and the commencement of a career at home. A working holiday is a journey taken by many around the world and experienced by a broad range of people across all professions, naturally drawn to the pull of the metropolitan centre and the "cultural capital" this affords the traveler.[92] But it is in the sheer number of people, the almost uniform experience and destination, travelling as an identifiable cohort, and the entrenched nature of the trip which makes this a specifically Australasian phenomenon. Outside Australia and New Zealand this kind of working holiday appears rare or at least undocumented, particularly in other Commonwealth member states like Canada and South Africa.[93] Essential to this conception of a working holiday, and what sets it apart from other architectural travel, is in its length, thus enabling complete immersion in an environment far from home. The trip was about renegotiating the participant's view of the world – both those they encountered abroad and those back home – over an extended period of time. Within this, there was a kind of ambiguity and uncertainty embedded into the experience. Compared to other well-known global work travel, for example the pilgrimages made by Japanese architects specifically to work in the atelier of Le Corbusier, there was no clear aim or outcome for these journeys.[94] It was about leaving, for no particular purpose other than the freedom of leaving and immersing oneself in another environment.

The relative geographic isolation of Australia and New Zealand appears to have driven this tradition, coupled with the vast distances between capital cities within the country and a desire to expand one's knowledge beyond their immediate environments. Extending the work of Woollacott, the ambition and motivation for going is also critical in defining the working holiday. Rather than an expectation to 'make it' overseas, the ambition of those antipodean travelers

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[92] The architectural profession in London in the 1930s to the 1960s was enormously diverse, and offices were staffed by architects from across the world. However, this was largely the result of migration, with architects having moved to the metropolitan centre to study, to further their careers in high profile offices, or to flee volatile political situations. Architects would then settle in the UK, or continue moving further afield, most visibly to America.

[93] While this is difficult to document, a survey of national histories from similar countries do not identify the working holiday as a phenomenon, while Australian and New Zealand histories clearly do, as identified in the text above. An examination of other national architectural biographical databases, like *Artefacts: The Built Environment of Southern Africa*, which comprehensively document the careers of twentieth century architects in South Africa, show the working holiday to be a rare occurrence in South Africa for example. See: *Artefacts: The Built Environment of Southern Africa,* Accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.artefacts.co.za

[94] Masami Nakino, Nagatoshi Tsuchihashi, Kunio Mayekawa, and Junzo Sakakura all worked in his atelier. See: "Galeri Taisei: Le Corbusier and Japan" accessed 24 May 2022, https://www.galerie-taisei.jp/en/archives/japan.html

appears almost uniformly to have an experience, encompassing everything from the aspirational to the mundane. This was experience both in terms of their career, but also in lived experience. They largely parallel the ambitions that Woollacott has identified: "to advance her education or skills, to absorb the latest styles, genres, research, or techniques, to study under the most renowned practitioners, to gain access to the most respected publishing houses – or simply to get a job."[95] For many of those architects that went, the ambition was sometimes as simple as finding a job in order to support living in London, and to fund future travels to the continent. But there was also the motivation to see beyond the restrictive geographical perspective that comes from living in a small town. If there ever was an intention to 'make it', it was always at home, using their overseas experience as a symbol of expertise and development.[96]

In addition to these motivations, what makes the Antipodean working holiday a distinct phenomenon is its almost institutionalized character, which saw it essentially embedded, albeit informally, in the education process. Which as demonstrated above, is borne out in the literature where the trip assumes a position as so common as to be almost invisible. It is difficult to precisely quantify the number of architects that undertook a working holiday across both Australia and New Zealand. David Saunders, who first identified the phenomenon in the interwar period has noted that around 20 percent of the Australian profession were overseas at any one time on a working holiday, [97] and it is clear that this statistic held true for most states across the coming decades. In Western Australia during the fifteen-year period of this study, more than forty young architects, or former architecture students, undertook a working holiday in this mode. Some were recent graduates from Perth Technical College, others were members of the local architectural student association, having completed their training under the old article system. Some had switched course mid-way, starting out in the architecture course before changing to art, engineering, or design but remained in close contact, and usually continued to be members of, the architectural student association. Given the unreliable records and the undocumented number of articled students, a true picture is hard to discern. But as an example, in some PTC graduating classes, this meant that in some years more than half of the graduating students experienced a working holiday in this format.[98] In 1955, there were 10 graduates, and 6 went almost immediately to the

[95] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune*, 6.
[96] See: Paul Hogben, "International Comparison as Critical Strategy," in *Semi-Detached: Writing, Representation and Criticism in Architecture* (Melbourne: Uro Media, 2012), 197-210.
[97] Saunders, "…So I Decided to Go Overseas," 22.
[98] The numbers and statistics of students are further examined in chapter 3.1.5 of this thesis.

UK. The trip was described to me by the architect Gus Ferguson, part of this 1955 graduating class, and later repeated by others, as being colloquially known as the 'sixth year' of the course, which gives an indication to its embedded nature.[99]

2.1.10 The Changing Nature of the Working Holiday

Such a definition of the working holiday is necessarily broad, and this allows for the significant variation which played out between decades and different states. The travel routes, practices, and key contacts, along with the support institutions that facilitated these holidays were subject to frequent change, which makes this overarching definition useful. This variety is clearly apparent even within the working holiday as experienced in Western Australia which had distinct characteristics both before and after World War II. In the 1930s, as Chapter 4 will elaborate upon, the working holiday emerged largely out of necessity given the lack of formalized education available. Most of those who travelled went seeking further education beyond the articled system and the informal classes that were available in Perth. This meant that the primary reason for travelling was to undertake a formal education at places like the AA and RSP, while supporting themselves financially by working for major practices. This was in contrast to the experience of those in the eastern states with well-developed academic programs. For eastern states' architects, interwar travel to London was less about education and instead centered on gaining work experience at key firms. Here they could increase their knowledge and further their careers through high profile opportunities abroad and the authority that came with overseas experience.[100] But with the instituting of the formalized diploma course in 1946 at Perth Technical College, the motivations for going overseas in Western Australia changed. The twin motivation of work and formal study became rather travel and work, and it became rare for those graduates in the 1950s to seek out further study abroad. If study abroad was sought out in this period it was almost always in the US, or for adjacent courses like town planning not offered in Perth until much later.[101]

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[99] R.J. Ferguson, Telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 23 October, 2018.
[100] Hogben, "International Comparison as Critical Strategy," 197-210.
[101] Some of the high profile architects that went to America during this period include: Geoffrey Summerhayes (WA), John Morphett (SA), Bruce Rickard (NSW). Keith Neighbour and Peter Muller (SA), were among a number of students who won Fulbright scholarships and went to study in the US. In NZ Bill Toomath went to study at the Harvard GSD after he completed his degree in Auckland.

Amidst all these fluctuations, it was in the 1950s that the working holiday was codified, which is why this decade is the central focus of the thesis. It was in this decade that key aspects of the trip were articulated - travelling primarily for work rather than study, taking advantage of the journey to explore Europe and Asia on the way or coming home, travelling in groups or with partners, and living in shared houses – which became hallmarks of the working holiday well into the late 1960s.

2.1.11 Professional Histories

Central to understanding this working holiday as a particular, locally bounded phenomenon is through identifying it as a largely student-led initiative, perpetuated through wide reaching and continually refreshing personal networks. The nature of the holiday as an autonomous, student directive emerges as one of, if not the defining characteristics of the trip, at least in Western Australia, and was key to its ongoing success. It was not arranged or facilitated by the profession, through the Institute, or the schools. Rather it was organised and codified by a dynamic and evolving student body, interested in furthering their own education and increasing the standard of the local profession. In this sense the thesis engages with and challenges many conventional architectural histories, particularly the body of literature which deals with the profession itself and the careful boundaries which it upholds. Andrew Leach described the recent survey text by Harry Margalit, *Australia: Modern Architectures in History*, as a history of "buildings and professional debates", which is a description which might be applied to much of the conventional histories of the profession which have left little room for socially driven initiatives like the working holiday.[102] Exemplified by seminal texts like Andrew Saint's *The Image of the Architect*, and Mark Crinson and Jules Lubbock's *Architecture: Art or Profession? Three Hundred Years of Architectural Education in Britain*,[103] survey histories which examine the discursive foundations of the profession have largely been told through the top-down debates and institutional formations. These texts seek to identify the shifting disciplinary boundaries of the profession and the key mechanisms which have worked to both shore up this boundary and influence the practice within it. These range from education policies and registration control, to professionally administered instruments like journals,

[102] Andrew Leach, "Review: Australia: Modern Architectures in History by Harry Margalit," *Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians* 80, no. 1 (March 2021): 118.
[103] Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983); Mark Crinson and Jules Lubbock, *Architecture – Art or Profession? Three Hundred Years of Architectural Education in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

conferences, and competitions.[104] Given the authoritative focus of these studies, this has meant that the social aspects of the profession are often relegated to discursive footnotes, rather than articulated as potentially significant moments in the development of the profession. The continued focus on the professional formation of the discipline has in turn influenced the production of other more general histories that are centred on 'buildings and professional debates' rather than organic networks which might support, or even define the profession. While the potential for these social networks to inform professional discourse have been overlooked in these survey texts, recent studies have sought to challenge the dominance of this top-down view of how we understand professional boundaries and the way they were shaped. Notable examples included Dana Cuff's *Architecture: The Story of Practice,* and the work of Albena Yaneva who produced a 'bottom-up' history of the OMA practice to counter the classical narrative of its success.[105] The ability to counter these dominant narratives through these close studies of practice formation provided much guidance for this research.

The best known top-down professional survey history within the Australian context is Max Freeland's *The Making of the Profession*. Freeland looks at the influence that various bodies had on the shaping of the profession in Australia, with a particular focus on the formation of the state-based institutes and their influence on architectural training and the education system.[106] The profession is made, Freeland argues, by these professionally administered policies and debates. He boldly asserts, "The growth and work of the R.A.I.A and the Institutes and Associations that went before it are the history of the whole architectural profession in Australia".[107] This thesis then looks at another way to 'make' a profession, one which is made through bottom-up social networks and informal exchanges rather than professional debates and associations, and which can freely move beyond the strict borders of the profession. The working holiday, as this thesis argues, was enormously influential in the development of the architectural profession in Western Australia, both in the formation of key networks but also in articulating its ambitions and aims. It

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[104] For example Crinson and Lubbock explore the RIBA's influence over the education system and careful controlling of the entry requirements into the profession: Crinson and Lubbock, *Architecture – Art of Profession?*

[105] Dana Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Albena Yaneva, *Made by the Office for the Metropolitan Architecture: An ethnography of Design* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009). Other recent challenges include: Patrick Zamarian, "The Origins of the Oxford Conference within the networks of 1930s student activism," *Journal of Architecture* 24, no. 4 (2019): 571-592.

[106] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*.

[107] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, vii.

was a tradition that was organised and perpetuated almost exclusively through personal networks and motivated individuals operating outside the traditional boundaries of the profession as identified by Freeland and others.

2.1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the case study for this thesis, Western Australia, and situated the idea of the working holiday within the diverse body of literature with which it engages and which sits across the broad categories of architectural history and cultural studies. It produced a flexible definition of the working holiday and set out ways in which this holiday might be understood to have influenced the broader profession. It is important to acknowledge at the outset of this study that the working holiday was not just a product of the student network or a series of motivated individuals. It unfolded against the dramatic backdrop of the postwar era, in which the very nature of travel changed. According to Graeme Davison, "Before the Second World War, only a minority of Australians, mostly members of an Anglophile upper middle class, could afford to make the voyage to England. By the 1960s rising affluence in Australia, and a fall in the relative cost of passages…began to broaden the social mix of travellers making their way from Australia to England."[108] These cultural and economic factors were critical to shaping the success of the working holiday. It reduced the barriers of access and it meant that a broad spectrum of ordinary Australians, including architects, were able to travel. This meant that outside individual motivations, travel, as a broader cultural experience, was a fundamentally different experience in the postwar years. It became an essential part of the modern experience for many Australians as they freely explored beyond their borders, and one that was open to an increasingly large and diverse proportion of the population. In this sense, the working holiday as explored in this thesis, was part of a larger cultural shift which occurred in the postwar period which would fundamentally alter the way Australians saw themselves and their place in the world.

[108] Davison, "Tourists, Expats and Invisible Immigrants," n.p.

Chapter 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Introduction

> Our learned ex-students Lex Hill and Jack White have returned from their overseas sport basking in the belief that bachelorhood is for those who don't know any better. Lex, believing that Architecture definitely doesn't pay has put his wife to work earning "shekels" by serving coffee in Ean McDonald's old office. Jack must be congratulated on his recent engagement to Penny Hanrahan. Ross Chisholm, John Duncan and John Lidbury returned together (as you will no doubt have noted when attending the "Dive" on Friday nights). After over two years in Europe we hope to hear and see many of their travels. Fred Warren will be joining the "league of leavers" when he departs for England in three weeks time. Here's wishing you well Fred. Ray Leunig is spending winter in Austria, and is combining skiing with writing his memoirs – to get the atmosphere, we understand. Br-r-r. Morrie Fairbrother and his wife Margaret have settled down in a £5 a week service flat in Kensington. Morrie is working for Slater, Uren and Pike and is at present absorbed in a 12-storey office block. He reports that contemporary buildings are a disappointment in London as they weather badly. Apparently the smog doesn't flatter the finishes which become dirty and dingy in a matter of months. We also understand that the C.O.L has rocketted [sic] skywards in the last two months.[109]

Published in March 1956, this is a typical entry in the 'student notes' column which appeared regularly in *The Architect,* the official journal of the RAIA WA Chapter, and sent out each quarter to their members. The column recorded various news from the local student body and had a particular focus on the exploits of overseas travelers. A key source for this thesis, the column provided key information regarding the trip by identifying those who went, where they worked, and the sorts of jobs they worked on. But as the above excerpt shows, the way the column was written reflects a microcosm of the burgeoning architectural scene as it developed in Western Australia in the 1950s. It describes an architecture culture in which the private, personal, and professional lives had considerable overlap – to the point where they are indistinguishable. The partners identified in the news update - Barbara Hill, Penelope Hanrahan, and Margaret

[109] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* (March 1956): 31.

Fairbrother - are part of the narrative, and appear alongside news on the living situations, holiday tales, and architectural criticism from abroad. Engagement notices and coffee shop openings are published in the state's official journal of record. This note is reflective not only of the tight-knit student group of Perth at that time but also of the working holiday which was a direct extension of this dense social network. Developing a methodology that can deal with a note like this, and could engage with these messy, overlapping worlds was central to this thesis and will be explored in this chapter.

The way these trips were reported in the state's widely circulated professional journal is a reminder of the intense overlap between personal and professional lives of these architects, particularly within a geographically isolated and small community. Discoveries were made and shared between friends, partners, and family. Architectural critique sits together with family updates, and projects are generated through these same complex networks. As an extension of this environment, the working holiday was a moment where these overlaps were brought together the intensified, and confined environment of London. A period where living, working, relationships, and ambitions were collapsed into an experience shared by a group of like-minded people living together in close proximity in the metropolitan centre. Through examining an intangible, yet significant event like a working holiday meant that the conventional tools and methods for writing architectural history were of little use in this thesis. This was not a study of buildings dispersed across professional and official architect, with clients, council minute books and drawing registers with which to contend with. It was a study of people – architects, family, friends – and of travelling, living and working together as they built a culture around them. Official records and traditional archival material offered little in the way of assistance to reconstruct the journey. It became apparent that there was a need to produce 'another kind' of architectural history, one which would have a particular methodological approach and toolkit.

This chapter sets out the methodology that was developed for this thesis, and outlines the key approaches, together with the range of methodological tools which were deployed in order to write this other kind of architectural history. It first outlines the idea of alternative architectural histories as it has been framed within the historiography of the discipline, before outlining the theoretical framing and introducing the approaches and tools used within the thesis. This thesis adopts a group biography approach to writing history together with tools appropriate for this approach. This includes the use of oral history, life writing sources, and personal archives

alongside official archives and primary sources. It is important to note at the outset that this kind of research, which deals with private recollections particularly personal events, requires a particularly personal response and engagement with the material. The positioning of myself as the author, and an explicit use of the first-person perspective in part is an acknowledgement of this, and is further explored throughout the chapter.

2.2.2 Writing Another Kind of History

The need to write another kind of architectural history has long been a missing presence within the historiography of the discipline. This has typically, as Mark Wigley has described, not an effort to rewrite history, but rather to reveal the 'blind spots' that are 'routinely left out of the picture."[110] Much of the tension might be seen to have arisen from an uncomfortable fit with architectural history's disciplinary engagement with art history practices. Historian Andrew Leach notes this is a tension shared by a number of professional services, including medicine or law, "where a historical discipline has formed alongside an art's or a profession's consciousness of its historical patrimony."[111] The articulated desire for a different kind of architectural history, distinct from art history conventions, has been in place at least since the late 1960s, a period which, as Leach notes, saw "the broad reformulation of architecture as a practice, culture and discourse."[112] This thesis does not set out to chart the production of architectural history, or provide an overview of its internal dynamics in light of these tensions, but here I sketch out an interest in alternative histories which provides a framework through which to situate the ambitions of this thesis.[113] Demetri Porphyrios provides an early attempt to articulate this idea in his essay 'Notes on a Method' which appeared in the 1981 special edition of *Architectural Design* 'On the Methodology of Architectural History' which Porphyrios edited.[114] This edition was Porphyrios's attempt to gather a collection of essays that examined the methodological tools of architectural history which he argued until that point had been absent in discussions of the discipline.[115] In it, he describes his

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[110] Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), xv.
[111] Andrew Leach, *What is Architectural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 116.
[112] Leach, *What is Architectural History*, 83
[113] See: Leach, *What is Architectural History*, for a detailed account of these developments.
[114] Demetri Porphyrios, "Notes on a Method," in *On the Methodology of Architectural History* (London: Architectural Design Profile, 1981), 95-104. See also: Stephen Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," PhD Thesis, *University of Sheffield School of Architecture*, 2011.
[115] Demetri Porphyrios, "Introduction," in *On the Methodology of Architectural History* (London: Architectural Design Profile, 1981), 2.

intention to work within a new critical history of architecture: "Let us, for a moment, suggest that we suspend notions of *Weltanschauung*, *Zeitgeist*, influence, evolution, origins, architecture/object, architect/author, creation, and above all the understanding of history as an interpretative commentary, so that we may sketch the outline of 'another' history of architecture."[116] Porphyrios sketched out an idea for this other history, in which he describes "Such a history of architecture, therefore, is interested not in categories that would describe a building, but in categories that would *describe the production*… of a building."[117] He called for a rejection of the art historical basis of evaluating buildings on a formal, compositional basis, replaced by an interest in the underlying discourses and broader fields within which a building is produced.[118]

Further interest in writing a different kind of history has recently emerged within a particular strand of history, one that is situated within the field of cultural studies.[119] This is a body of work that is motivated to produce another kind of history largely as a way to redistribute the dynamics of power away from historical canon of western architecture, and to reinstate the voices and architecture culture outside of the metropolitan, male-dominated centre, with an aim to produce a more inclusive, radical and nuanced view of architecture culture and the profession. This scholarship engages with a number of fields, including pioneering feminist and postcolonial studies as a way to reorient the discipline's history, and to allow for a more polyvocal and diverse historical view. In her introduction to the recent edited volume, *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research,* Janina Gosseye describes one outcome of this project as producing "a

[116] Porphyrios, "Notes on a Method," 99.
[117] Porphyrios, "Notes on a Method," 100
[118] The Bourdieun use of the term 'fields' here, and its underpinning of the article is articulated by Parnell in his thesis. Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," 53.
[119] Jessica Kelly, Robert Proctor, Stephen Parnell and others have all described their intentions as writing 'another' or 'different' architectural histories and stories. See: Jessica Kelly, "Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History: Personality and the Personal in the Story of J.M. Richards," in *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research,* Naomi Stead, Deborah van der Plaat, and Janina Gosseye, eds. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019), 77; Robert Proctor, "The Architect's Intention: Interpreting Post-war Modernism Through the Architect Interview," *The Journal of Design History* 19, no. 4(2006): 295; Stephen Parnell, "A Hotchpotch Series of Ad Hoc Solutions: Encountering Theo Crosby's Hammersmith House," *Architectural Histories* 9, no. 1 (2021): 25.

suite of microhistories and stories of everyday spaces as well as unknown and marginal figures emerged in an attempt to dismantle modern architecture's master narrative."[120]

One of the clearest formulations of how to produce a history that dismantles these power structures can be found in Elizabeth Darling's *Re-Forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity Before Reconstruction*.[121] In her introduction, Darling succinctly outlines a series of methodological prejudices which have coloured much of architectural history, with a particular focus on the Modern Movement in the twentieth century. Darling isolates a number of key prejudices that she sets out to repudiate. These include seeing "architectural history as comprised solely by a series of 'actual monuments'…rather than relating them to the broader contexts within which architecture is embedded"; viewing architecture as "something produced solely by architects"; and a "preoccupation with architecture as a primarily formal discipline'"[122] These prejudices, which she argues have produced a historiography primarily interested in building form, singular authors, professional debates, and formal excellence are countered by Darling through the expansion of focus beyond these limiting factors to "locate it within the wider contexts – social, political, economic, technological – in which it [architecture], like any other cultural practice, was and is embedded."[123] Through the medium of the book, Darling sets out to challenge these prejudices and to write another historical account of architectural modernism which she concludes: "In sum, most have failed to consider modernism historically. And, in their focus on individuals – buildings or architects – they have rarely considered how a response to such demand coalesced, or was forged into, a critical mass."[124]

A 2018 special issue of *Architecture and Culture* edited by Jessica Kelly working under the theme of 'Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture' brought many of the prejudices and issues surrounding the broadening of the discourse and the challenges to the canon to a succinct point. Building on the work of various historians and critics from the past three decades, including Kenneth Frampton, Beatriz Colomina, Andrew Higgot, and Elizabeth Darling, Kelly

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[120] Janina Gosseye, "A short history of Silence: The Epistemological Politics of Architectural Historiography," in *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research,* Naomi Stead, Deborah van der Plaat, and Janina Gosseye, eds. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019), 12.
[121] Elizabeth Darling, *Re-Forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity Before Reconstruction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).
[122] Darling, *Re-Forming Britain,* 2-3.
[123] Darling, *Re-Forming Britain,* 3.
[124] Darling, *Re-Forming Britain,* 3.

assembled a group of essays that addressed precisely this issue as it has unfolded recently and provides a neat and concise summary of the debates. Following Darling's assertions, Kelly argued that "architecture is more than the work of individual architects" and posed two key questions to be pursued in the journal: "What kinds of work or practice count as architecture and design production? And, Who gets to be called an architect of designer?"[125] This special issue developed out of a symposium which Kelly describes was intended

> to explore the places, practices and people that were hidden in most conventional discussions of architecture and design…. The sites of production like the office, the conference room, the bar and the objects that furnish them. The overlooked, anonymous designers, the ordinary and everyday people rather than the 'great' or extraordinary… The overlaps between professional and personal interactions, such as when an editorial meeting turns into an evening in the pub, or when the studio overlaps with the sitting room and when colleagues are friends or lovers.[126]

Kelly's provocation provided the impetus in this thesis to view the working holiday as part of this broader constellation of places where architecture 'happens', where the personal and professional mix, but which is a space which remains 'hidden' within conventional architectural histories. The period these architects spent working overseas entirely overlapped with a range of different networks. The trip was shared with former classmates at Perth Technical College, architects from across Australia and the world, artists, along with their friends, family and partners. Together they shared apartments and ship cabins on long voyages. They travelled, went out for drinks, dinners, to the theatre and the ballet. They had children, got engaged and sometimes married, and played host to their parents, siblings and friends when they visited. It was an event where architecture 'happened' and architecture culture was made but lay clearly outside traditional professional boundaries.

Kelly expanded on these spaces of overlapping interactions in her paper, "Reconciling the Personal and Professional in Architectural history", noting that her interest in these hidden histories and illuminating the intersections between personal and professional lives was first explored in her

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[125] Jessica Kelly, "Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture," *Architecture and Culture,* 6, no. 1 (2018): 6.
[126] Kelly, "Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms," 7.

PhD thesis on the architectural critic J.M. Richards.[127] Her thesis examined the career and life of Richards, and was particularly centred on his editorial role at *The Architectural Review*, in which his private life and editorial work became inseparable. Kelly notes that her "ability to write a history of Richards…that embraced the complexity of architectural production" required the use of a methodological approach and a series of tools drawn directly from the field of cultural studies.[128] Indeed, many of these recent attempts to write different histories draw on a methodological approach and tool kit that is more typically found in the realm of cultural studies, and particularly those which developed in an effort to write "history from below."[129] The tools that Kelly describes: oral history, life writing, personal archives, and biography, have a long history within the field of cultural and social studies, and are widely regarded for their potential to incorporate a more diverse group of voices to the historical narrative and for their capacity to tell a range of different stories. These tools enable alternative perspectives by providing the means to construct a history from diverse sources, fragmented and incomplete archives and providing a platform through which to engage those people without access to more conventional platforms or recording methods. It was through the work of Kelly, Darling, and others which revealed the potential of these tools and the adoption of a diverse approach which illuminated a path forward for this study.

This thesis investigates a group of architects that left little in the way of formal archival sources or records. It examines their experiences on a journey that can be considered part of a 'hidden' aspect of architectural production and which had a clear overlap of personal and professional networks. This then demands the use of a range of methodological tools typically used in histories of less visible, or peripheral figures, or as Staughton Lynd has described, "the inarticulate,' … persons who did not leave behind a trail of documents."[130] In response, this thesis adopts a group biographical approach to history and uses a range of tools and sources familiar to this approach to construct a narrative. These tools include oral histories, alongside 'life writing' - sources like diaries, letters, and memoirs, together with more conventional sources like contemporary publications and archival records.

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[127] Kelly, "Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History," 78.
[128] Kelly, "Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History," 77.
[129] 'History from below' is a term first coined by E.P Thompson, also described as 'history from the bottom up' or 'people's history'. See: Staughton Lynd, "Oral History from Below," *The Oral History Review* 21, no. 1(1993): 1-8.
[130] Lynd, "Oral History From Below," 1.

The use of these methods has three specific aims within this thesis. Firstly, they provide a voice to those architects and people outside the centre – who have had little motivation for leaving or producing a formal archive or traces of their practice. Secondly, they provide a way to reconstruct something as intangible as a holiday, which leaves little in the way of formal evidence. Thirdly, it provides an approach which can more fully acknowledge the personal nature of the journey. Together, these tools allow the telling of another kind of architectural history. This other history is essentially two stories told simultaneously: primarily it tells the story of a specific event which a significant impact on an otherwise uncharted regional architecture culture. But it also tells the story of postwar British architecture, told from an alternative perspective of those imperial subjects that were essential to its operation as a way to redistribute power within this larger narrative.

2.2.3 Background to the Method

It would be remiss of me to not mention the COVID-19 pandemic and its profound effect on this research project. This is particularly important to clarify in order to stress that this is not the definitive history of the WA working holiday to London: it is just one, subjective history. Tom Stannage, in his landmark cultural history of Perth, *The People of Perth,* noted "The past is not inert. It moves as the focus of the historian shifts. There are as many histories of Perth as there are people writing or talking about it."[131] Michel-Rolph Trouillot wrote, "Human beings participate in history as both actors and as narrators" and this is certainly true of this thesis. [132] The research is shaped indelibly by my position as a narrator of history. This project was influenced by a host of factors, both personal motivations, and external influences, of which the pandemic was the most striking personally. I feel this is important to acknowledge, as the experience of living through the pandemic has shaped much of the methods, approach and arguments presented in the thesis and the presence of the author, and first person perspective, within the text.

This thesis was written and researched across the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, predominantly in Melbourne, a city which had endured one of the longest and hardest lockdowns in the world. Access to any library, archives, and desk space was impossible for much of this period. Western

[131] C.T. Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth: Carroll's for Perth City Council, 1979), 9.
[132] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 2.

Australia, the focus of this research, shut its borders to the rest of Australia for much of the pandemic, meaning access to archives, people and material was made difficult. As a research project which deals with social groups and the intertwining of private and professional lives, what was most difficult was the access to people, and the ability to build relationships and to develop rapport with those individuals and their families that I would be writing about. But while this was difficult, it was this distance and restricted access to resources which fundamentally changed my approach to the thesis and in particular my methodology. As a way to bridge the gap between myself and Perth, and to overcome the lack of access to resources, I began to call around people connected to the project, mostly older architects and their partners that had undertaken a working holiday. These conversations would often not end up in the thesis but they provided a way for me to continue to engage with the broader group I was studying. Primarily, through a series of generous recommendations, it lead me to reach out to more family members and partners of those architects that had gone to the UK, along with other architects that studied at PTC but did not travel overseas.[133] As I spoke to people like Barbara Hill and Margaret Fairbrother, both of whom are mentioned in the opening 'note' of this chapter, I began to realise just how enmeshed this broader social group was, and that the working holiday to the UK was equally significant to them. This was not a trip taken just by architects, but a large group of people in their close social orbit and it was slowly revealed to me just how much their ambitions, travel routes, itineraries, and experiences overlapped. The slippage between the personal and professional was made abundantly clear. As my phone calls snowballed on the back of recommendations and shared contacts I spoke to more and more people. A number of times it would end up simply as a casual conversation where I asked about their time in London. Sometimes I would write down hastily scrawled notes, but often I would just listen and enjoy the stories. Partly this was out of curiosity, partly to further my understanding of the context, but also as a kind escape. I was living vicariously through these fond recollections of people I had never met in person, traipsing across the UK and Europe in the 1950s at a time when I couldn't escape my apartment. My own desire to go to London, to live and work in the same manner as those I was studying, seemed hopeless. What had started as a way to stay connected and to engage with a world outside of my apartment turned into a series of conversations that would shift the course of my research. In time, I came to

[133] It is important to acknowledge those people that I spoke to here. They include: Barbara Hill, Beth Duncan, Audrey Coll, Stuart Coll jnr., Helen Whitaker, Claire Whitaker, Morris and Margaret Fairbrother, Siobhan Hewitt, Andrew Parry, Jacquie Sprogoe, Ian Watson, Jennifer Flintoff, Graham Stafford, Julie Potts, and Lisa Moore. A complete list can be found in the acknowledgements.

rely on the testimonies of the partners like Barbara Hill or Beth Duncan, and through ongoing conversations with them, they became central to the narrative.[134] They were not just bystanders able to relay their husband's story of the working holiday to me. They were there and direct participants in this phenomenon, and they played a significant part in the conception and success of these journeys. They had the same ambitions and interests, and experienced this period abroad together. I needed a methodological approach and thesis objective that would reflect that.

The thesis had started out, and remained until after my confirmation and the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, as a study that looked at the notion of exchange between the UK and Western Australia. The working holiday to the UK was to be just one part of this exchange, and the focus was rather more on British architects that had migrated to Western Australia, particularly those like Francis Senior Bolland, Bill Busfield, Gordon Stephenson, and Peter Middleton, who had taken up senior teaching roles in the technical college and universities. But with access to the archives and people closed, and with my increasing conversations with people about their own working holidays to the UK, I decided instead to concentrate solely on this journey. The research had become more personal, and so developing a methodology to deal with this condition became essential, something which I had not envisaged as I began what I thought would be a more straightforward, archival based research project as initially proposed.

While this thesis largely follows an established formula – it essentially follows the lives of capital-A architects, who were trained, registered, and professionally recognized as such – the ability to conduct this research, to present this narrative and to understand the significance of this trip was enormously dependent on those phone calls made during lockdown and the recollections of those from within that broader social network. These conversations with the partners, friends, and family of those architects I intended to study completely changed my understanding of both the journey itself and the context of the architectural profession in Perth during the postwar period. The interactions I had with this broader group of people were essential to my research and my understanding of the period, even if they aren't always directly obvious in the text. But this relationship, and desire to acknowledge these contributions led me to seek out a methodology which would reflect these interactions and to make their contributions in some way visible.

[134] Barbara was married to Lex Hill, and Beth was married to John Duncan.

An important aspect of these encounters was that it led me to the work of Jessica Kelly, Stephen Parnell, Elizabeth Darling and others outlined above, whose recent scholarship has grappled precisely with these messy, complicated and personal relationships as they intersect with practice, and those 'hidden' 'sites of production' like schools, holidays, and bars where architecture can unfold.[135] Their work provided a model for how to not only approach architectural history as one embedded in a broader social and cultural environment, but also it illuminated a range of tools and methodological approaches which could be used to navigate these histories. It led me to pursue a history that acknowledged the experiences of those outside the immediate architectural profession, and provided space to highlight their experiences, along with their input and contributions in the making of a local architecture culture. These conversations were of course not the only driver behind the methodological tools and approach used here. But they were, for me, the catalyst to pursue this line of inquiry which would develop as the thesis continued and access to libraries and archives became sporadically available.

2.2.4 Group Biography as an Approach

Developing out of these conversations, and the reading of the student notes section in *The Architect*, it was clear that understanding the working holiday as a group activity would be of central importance, and that this would directly inform the thesis. From this understanding, the thesis adopts group biography as its overarching methodological approach. A relatively new methodological technique, group biography is a specific approach which can be viewed as a subset of collective biography, which is typically used in collections of distinct biographies like the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Rather than individually grouped biographies, collated under various organizational umbrellas, group biography is a discrete subset "which takes as its primary subject the relationship between a group of people: their importance for each other… becomes the primary issue for discussion."[136]

Krista Cowman who has used the technique in her work defines the method as: "a distinct methodology which self-consciously retains a focus on the individual even when it sits within work which aims to use individual lives to explore collective experiences, or within studies of

[135] Kelly, "Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms," 7.
[136] Barbara Caine, *Biography and History*, (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 61.

community."[137] Historian Barbara Caine describes the benefit of this approach as part of a renewed desire to "understand lives more fully as they were actually lived and to give proper weight to the relationships which many individuals had… with wider networks and communities."[138] Caine argues that these accounts have the ability to "both position people more securely in their immediate social context and to expand the illustrative capacity of biography by showing both the common and uncommon features of particular lives."[139] The use of group biography has been tied into an effort to further democratise history, with its ability to relay the experiences of those otherwise outside a singular biographical interest. In this sense, it is important to note that the method has its roots in feminist practice of the 1960s and 70s, work which has paved the way for future historians to adopt the practice.[140] Caine writes, "This new interest in ordinary and obscure lives is closely connected to the democratizing impulses of the new social histories of the 1970s, with their concern not only to explore the lives and experiences of ordinary people but also to see the world from their viewpoint and allow them to speak for themselves."[141]

Group biography projects have often taken the family unit as a group of study, with sisters being a particularly popular topic, but other group biographies have examined groups of unrelated people that have experienced the same event. Key examples include Luisa Passerini's seminal *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968,* which chronicles a group of unrelated people across Italy that experienced the political upheaval of events in 1968, and Krista Cowman's own account of the women that organized the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in the early twentieth century.[142] Through the construction of a series of parallel and intersecting micro biographies and experiences of those that experienced these events, these accounts provide an opportunity to grasp the experience of an event from both an individual and a collective level, with both enhancing the understanding of each perspective.[143] Instructively, both Cowman and Passerini's texts deal with a contained, discrete moment in their subjects' lives, rather than a

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[137] Krista Cowman, "Collective Biography," in *Research Methods for History,* Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, eds. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 85.
[138] Caine, *Biography and History*, 3-4.
[139] Caine, *Biography and History*, 4.
[140] Caine, *Biography and History*, 105-106.
[141] Caine, *Biography and History*, 105.
[142] Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996); Krista Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit: Paid Organisers of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) 1904-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
[143] Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit*, 6.

typical 'cradle to grave' biographical approach. Instead, they examine the effect of this event on the individual and how they contributed to a making of a shared cultural identity or a "sense of membership within a collective".[144] In the same sense, this thesis examines the working holiday as a discrete event in a person's life, shared by a group, which had a profound effect on the shaping of a collective professional identity back in Perth.

The use of group biography allows for an understanding of the trip and its significance outside of any individual achievements, further breaking down the focus on singular architects. Rather than following the narrative arc of a single person's journey on a working holiday, this thesis examines different aspects of a series of individual stories. The working holiday was a widely experienced phenomenon undertaken by a fluctuating group, but within the same broad professional community over a period of time, and sustained by a series of ongoing relationships that were continually renegotiated and navigated. In this way the use of group biography as an approach is deliberate, as it has the concomitant effect of clearly positioning the trip as a group activity. As seen in the working definition developed in the previous chapter this is one of the defining aspects of the phenomenon and which sets it apart from other architectural travels and work pilgrimages.

There is another aspect to adopting a group biography approach which I wish to highlight identified by Daisy Hay, a biographer who describes her craft as "writing lives together."[145] Hay argues that a particular quality of group biography is that it enables the further recovery of invisible or marginal figures: "[B]ecause its focus rests not on individuals but in the interstices between them…these interstices have become highly significant, as the spaces in which the stories of marginal figures have appeared."[146] Hay suggests that group biography is like looking at the construction of a net, in which both the visible string and the invisible holes between are essential to its construction. In this sense, the method allows a space for further recovery and appearance of those hidden individuals within those relationships that are examined, even without explicitly identifying them in the first instance.[147] This is significant in this study for a number of reasons. Primarily, it takes the focus off individual discoveries, which would reinforce the singular author narrative and reduce the central importance of the group aspect. Given the fractured nature of

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[144] Joan Wallach Scott, "Foreword," in Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), xii.
[145] Daisy Hay, "Adventures of an Unromantic Biographer," *Life Writing* 14, no. 2 (2017): 247.
[146] Hay, "Adventures of an Unromantic Biographer," 248.
[147] Hay, "Adventures of an Unromantic Biographer," 249.

the sources available, this is a story full of holes, only held together by the visible fragments of dispersed pieces of information and recollections. Through attempting to construct the 'string' of the net with these fractured sources, a diverse cast of figures appeared in the 'holes', which might have otherwise been obscured. Figures like Beth Duncan, initially engaged to provide information on her husband John, emerge from the holes in the net, only to become an essential part of its construction. Group biography allows the working holiday to be seen as an unfinished net, full of holes and fraying string, with space for future relationships to be examined, other voices to be heard, and figures to be identified and incorporated into the larger picture.

2.2.5 Oral History

By taking a biographical approach, this study relies on sources and tools to gather evidence which are typical of a study that is centered on people's lives. Chief among them is the use of oral history. As shown in the widely regarded and well cited recent edited collection of essays, *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural History*, the use of oral history in architectural history has grown in popularity in recent years. It is now one of the more visible and effective methodological tools for unearthing what editor Janina Gosseye has described as "different voices" and "alternative stories" within the profession.[148]

This thesis takes an approach which combines the two dominant modes of oral historical approaches as outlined by Lynn Abrams – as a project of recovery, and as an analytical practice.[149] Abrams, a leading scholar of the method, argues that the use of oral history has been characterized by a shifting tension between these two modes throughout the twentieth century. Originally used only as a tool for historical recovery, Abrams has shown that in the 1970s oral history was reconfigured as an analytical tool largely due to the work of Luisa Passerini.[150] This shift is illustrated in her landmark article, "Work, Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism," where Passerini stressed the need to move beyond "a predominantly factual use of oral history… this is not enough."[151] Rather it was the specificity and unique nature of an oral historical account that needed to be acknowledged. She continues: "We cannot afford to lose sight of the peculiar specificity of oral material… we should not ignore that the raw material of oral history consists not

[148] Gosseye, "A Short History of Silence," 12.
[149] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 5-6.
[150] Abrams, *Oral History Theory,* 7.
[151] Luisa Passerini, "Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism," *History Workshop,* no. 8 (Autumn 1979): 84

just of factual statements, but is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires."[152]

While Passerini stressed the importance of viewing oral history as a subjective and critical method, the role that it can play in the recovery of information, particularly from those areas that might be described as peripheral, remains of key importance. Oral history is used here in the first instance as a recovery tool, using it to piece together the travels of these young architects, identifying their travel routes, companions, lists of workplaces and projects involved with during their time away. But while this was the primary motivation, the imperative to treat the material as a critical document, one that is fallible, and shaped by forces like memory, narrative, and representation, remains present.

Undertaking the oral histories for this project occupied a significant portion of the research effort, and the way they were executed, used and interpreted varied dramatically across the project timeline. In the first instance, a mixture of formal and informal interviews were conducted. This was largely in an effort to identify the limits of the trip which had not been previously documented. I began with the limited literature available, mostly those mentions in the student notes column of *The Architect* which were almost indecipherable given the level of in-jokes, and colloquial language used. I needed to find out in the first instance, who went, how many went, where they went, and how they got there. Some of the architects I interviewed I had admired since my undergraduate degree and knew much of their work and their careers. Others I had never encountered before: I was just passed on their details knowing they had also 'gone abroad'.

When travel allowed it, a series of formal in person interviews were arranged and completed with full ethics approval and training. The interviews were semi-structured, recorded, and then transcribed. These formal interviews were offset by a number of informal conversations, follow up phone calls, emails and other dialogues, particularly as the pandemic intervened and formal in-person interviews presented a logistical challenge. Where possible the transcriptions were checked by the subjects, often over these follow up conversations, which allowed the information from the oral histories to be confirmed and elaborated on in a process that Staughton Lynd has

[152] Passerini, "Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism," 84

described as essential to the use of oral history in producing histories 'from the bottom up.'[153] In these follow up correspondences, it became clear that these interviews were done equally as gathering information, but also as a social introduction. Abrams notes that "oral history is a collaborative endeavour, the result of a relationship between interviewer and interviewee."[154] Conducting these interviews were not just about forming a relationship in order to gather data. It was about making myself known to the participants and ensuring there was a level of comfort established between myself and the interviewee with the hope of a mutual benefit. The things I was interested in, and questions asked were closely aligned with deeply personal and private moments of their lives. The working holiday often bore witness to engagement proposals, marriages, births, and tragedy. In this regard, the oral history process was only part of an ongoing relationship with the subjects of the thesis. While conducting the in-person interviews, I would be shown items from their private archives, exchange contact details, and pursue follow up conversations. Conducting the oral history became just one part of a wider research engagement required to construct the narratives of these journeys.

The interviews almost always took place in peoples homes, but occasionally at their local cafes. This meant that family members were often around, and they would add information, interject, or would come and go throughout the interview process. Sometimes on a phone call I would be passed around between family members, as they interjected or offered their version of events, prompting each other to recall particular moments. This meant I met extended family members, friends, and associates, many of whom I had some kind of connection to given the small nature of Perth and its architectural community. It was important to me that I respected this level of intimacy and generosity afforded to me. I was also keenly aware of my position as a researcher. Although I would identify myself initially as a student from the University of Melbourne, I would go to great lengths to ensure they knew I was 'a local.' I would note my family still in Perth and would point out my time having studied and worked as an architect there, along with demonstrating my intimate knowledge of the city and its architectural community. I found that if I did not identify my Perth background the answers would be general, vague, and broad.

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[153] Lynd, "Oral History From Below," 3. Lynd presents a series of points to follow when producing oral history from below including "Those who provide oral histories can themselves help to verify and correct the information provided."
[154] Abrams, *Oral History Theory,* 10.

In total I conducted 18 semi structured interviews for the thesis, along with having casual conversations, phone calls, and email exchanges. Many of the interviews I conducted did not make it directly into the final project. In particular, I conducted a number of interviews with architects that had traveled in the 1960s but given the scope of the research changed to focus on the 1950s, these accounts only feature briefly in the conclusion of the thesis. However, it is important to acknowledge these accounts as they were crucial in forming my understanding of the working holiday as a phenomenon, one which spanned several decades and had a specific, ongoing set of qualities. In particular, it was these conversations that most informed the working definition that was in the previous chapter. This is a quirk of the oral history process and aligns with Passerini's interest in the method as a critical tool. While the stories of people like Bob Gare, Colin Moore and Walter Hunter are not the main focus of the thesis, the process of interviewing them proved to be fundamental to my understanding of the topic and it was through them that I discovered other sources and lines of inquiry.

2.2.6 Life Writing Sources

Alongside oral histories, a range of material including examples of life writing like letters, diaries, and memoirs together with a range of personal ephemera like membership cards, annotated maps, Christmas cards, ticket stubs, slides and photographs were used to construct this history. Usually found within private family collections and often very personal in nature, the discovery of these items added significant ability to understand this journey and the kinds of activities that occurred. These are sources typical of biographical projects, but as Jessica Kelly has noted, they are 'less conventional' in architectural history.[155]

In her comprehensive study of the use of biography in history, Barbara Caine makes particular note of the overlap and intersection which occurred in the late 20th century between group or collective biographies and the use of microhistory, where both attempt "to gain access to the inner lives, the patterns of thought and belief, the emotions and the voices of ordinary people, especially the peasants and workers of the past whose voices are usually silent."[156] Caine argues that these histories often converge on the lack of resources and archival materials that are specific to both. When a chance discovery of a diary or personal letters occurs, it directs the historical

[155] Kelly, "Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History," 77.
[156] Caine, *Biography and History*, 111.

focus towards those particular people, even if the intent was not to use biography as a method.[157] This is certainly true of this thesis with its lack of traditional sources to consult, and so the chance discovery of archival fragments and personal records has indeed shaped much of the narrative. The discovery of particular fragments were particularly valued for their ability to offset the oral histories and archival records and to provide rich texture and insights into the thoughts and feelings of those people in the immediate present. Two discoveries became central to this thesis, not just in the material that they provided to enrich and flesh out the narrative, but also in shaping my own understanding of the period and of the working holiday as an event. This is to say, much like the oral histories, the details from these materials do not necessarily dominate the text, but they informed much of my historical thinking and processing of information, in spite of their visibility throughout the text.

The first of these sources were the diaries of Ross Chisholm. Held by his daughter Katrina, she generously scanned entries for me, and later allowed me to read them during a visit to her home where her father's personal and professional archives are kept. Chisholm's diaries, which span the years immediately preceding, during and after his travels to the UK meticulously record his daily movements and appointments. They are not personal diaries, but professional, date keeping diaries. A typical entry, (albeit a particularly busy entry) reads:

> Friday September 17, 1954:
>
> Prus cocktail party 6.30
>
> TB Marsham CT. St.
>
> Lunch John Jones. 12.45
>
> Ring Denis Clarke Hall 12.00
>
> See Arthur
>
> Mr Alexander 2.pm
>
> Chamberlin Powell & Bon 6.15

[157] This is the case with microhistories, which often do not initially set out to use biography as an approach. Caine, *Biography and History*, 111.

Chisholm's diaries kept a list of appointments and events, which he maintained for over a decade. Given the lack of detail, much of the entries needed interpreting. This was done with the help of Katrina, but also through correlating with the oral histories I had done and information found in other sources: names could be confirmed, offices checked, and events attended could be identified. The diaries provided an insight not just into Chisholm's life, but also they were a window into the kind of experience had by the graduates while living in London, at a level otherwise impossible. The diaries provided a kind of base reference for understanding how the working holiday in the 1950s might have unfolded.

These diaries were offset by the chance discovery of a cache of 16 letters written by Edwin Whitaker and sent home to his parents between May 1952 and April 1954 as he travelled and worked through South Africa and across the UK. Writing letters home was, as Graeme Davison has described, "an integral part of the travel experience…[and] It is likely that many thousands of such European travel diaries and blue airmail letters now reside, neatly bundled and numbered, in cupboards and garages across Australia."[158] The discovery of these letters was a direct result of my calling and conversations that I had during lockdown. I had tracked down Whitaker's daughter Claire,[159] and over multiple phone calls she shared aspects of her parents' lives with me, both of whom had travelled to London for working holidays, and she hunted around for any traces from their trips that might help. On discovery of the letters, Claire carefully scanned them and sent them to me. The discovery of these letters did as Caine identified. It changed the direction of the research as they allowed me access and insight into the journey I had not thought possible. A particular joy was when the letters worked in concert with Chisholm's diaries. The letters brought Chisholm's diary to life, and the overlaps between them were pure joy. For example, Chisholm's diary records the day he arrived with John Lidbury in London:

> March 9, 1954; Tuesday.
>
> Arrive London
>
> Meet Ed at St. Pancras
>
> In to London in Afternoon

[158] Davison, "Tourists, Expats and Invisible Immigrants," n.p.
[159] I must thank John Taylor for his assistance in passing on Claire's details, along with many other similar contacts.

> Bus into Piccadilly Circus.[160]

In the Whitaker letters, he provides a personal account of this encounter:

> Didn't quite get things finished last night owing to having to clean up the flat so that John Lidbury and Ross Chisholm can (or could) enter a clean flat. Yes they arrived at St Pancras at 1pm and I came out to the flat with them.[161]

Once I was able to travel to Western Australia, I met up with Claire where she showed me her fathers extensive slide collection, including photos taken during his trip and some of the few remaining slides from that period of the working holiday. Other pieces of life writing emerged during the course of the research. A collection of newspaper clippings, personal notes, and letters held by Mervyn Parry were photographed and sent to me by his daughter Siobhan Hewitt. A letter from John Duncan to his friends Arnold Potts and Doug Saunders about his time in London was unearthed by Arnold's daughter Julie. Personal letters between John Duncan and Erno Goldfinger were found in the RIBA archives. Often these letters contained sensitive, private material that did not belong and was not right to include in the thesis. This threw up another issue with which to contend. Architects like Whitaker, or Chisholm were modest, professional architects, certainly not people who might have imagined their private records would be combed over for study and so the material needed to be treated with a degree of care and respect while honoring the records that they kept.

2.2.7 Private Archives

The letters and diaries described above were found within various private archives scattered across the country and internationally and are used extensively within the thesis. These archives fell largely into two categories. The first was a personal architectural archive. Either held by the architect or their family, in most instances this was not a formal archive but typically a small folder of newspaper clippings, business cards and old CV's, an assortment of photographs and slides, and in some rare cases drawings. Extremely fragmented in their nature, they did not constitute a cohesive story of practice but rather a small and select collection, often those articles or photographs held dear to the person or their family. Some were fairly extensive. In other cases it

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[160] Ross Chisholm Personal Diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm.
[161] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 8 March 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

was a single newspaper clipping or photograph found floating in a drawer. These were usually examined during the course of undertaking an oral history interview with the subject, particularly if conducted within their family home. These personal archives were intimate and typically mixed in with the broader family archive. Family photos, personal letters, and other treasures were unearthed and kept alongside drawing fragments and specifications. Some were photographed and incorporated into the thesis, while others were simply admired and became part of a complex mosaic of objects and memories through which to understand these trips and their broader context. A particular note must be made of the generosity of those who provided me access to these archives. Not only for opening up their private and intimate memories, but also to those who provided me with access to them while access was physically restricted, sending me photos over text, emailing and scanning items, or mailing me various pieces in the post. But there were other more formal private collections. Academics Geoffrey London and Simon Anderson at the University of Western Australia generously allowed me to access their own research collections, including their own research on Western Australian architecture, alongside valuable documents they had either collected, been gifted, or rescued from the bin.

2.2.8 Other Sources

Together with the use of oral history, life writing sources, and ephemera from private archives, this thesis also relies heavily on material from otherwise conventional sources. These include contemporary journals, newspaper articles, census lists, and shipping records, along with extensive materials held within major institutional archives. Chief amongst the sources used was a series of publications produced by architects within Western Australia. These include the publications of the local student association which span from the 1930s into the 1980s, which include the *T Square Journal* (1937), *PHI* (1950-1953), *Aedicule* (1960-1961), and *Developments* (1983). A major source for the thesis was *The Architect,* the official journal of the RAIA WA chapter, first published in 1939. The journal was the main chronicle of the profession within the state and functioned as both a document of building works, an outlet for discussion, and a place for news, events and communication with members. Until the late 1950s, the journal maintained a dedicated student column which provided the opening quote for this chapter. Written by the students this would prove to be the single best and most comprehensive resource for documenting the working holiday and as such this thesis relies heavily on its accounts. The journal more broadly is an essential document, which as John White put best in 1983 reflection on his

time as editor: "A prospective historian of Western Australian architecture is obliged to read the collected volumes of 'The Architect' (they are available within the Reid Library) to obtain an historical overview of professional views and work, because it is the best source for such information that exists."[162]

Institutional archives were also important for the research, especially those within the UK which provided some rare documents containing information pertaining to those graduates working careers within key UK offices. In particular, the Erno Goldfinger and Chamberlin Powell and Bon collections held at the RIBA proved to be a valuable resource, along with those records and journals kept by the Architectural Association, which was a key facilitator in the success of the working holiday through the employment agency it operated. Within Australia, three key repositories were used: The State Library of Western Australia, the State Records Office of Western Australia, and the archival collection of Curtin University. Both contain a number of collections used within this thesis, including the private papers of Peter Parkinson and Warwick Broomfield. The archives at Curtin University hold a large amount of material relating to the architecture course at Perth Technical College, including course lists, syllabuses, theses, and committee meeting minutes.

2.2.9 Conclusion

This thesis uses a novel methodological approach more typically found within the cultural studies field and adapts it to write 'another' kind of architectural history. It adopts a group biography approach to writing history, together with a series of supporting methodological tools including the use of oral history, life writing sources, personal archives alongside traditional archives and primary sources. This approach was chosen in response to a number of factors, not least the personal reflection and relationships that were formed during the pandemic and a desire to recognize this process as an integral part of the research project. Further to this, outside of the Imperial centre, it is rare for architects to preserve their work, or view it as valuable for future study, something which I experienced often during this project. The use of these tools and approaches further reflects this mindset, and they provided avenues to engage with this lack of publicly available material. Together, this methodological approach is used to reflect the shared nature of the working holiday, which was experienced together by a group of architects within a

[162] John White, "A Choice of Architects," *Developments* 1, (1983): 11.

broader social milieu of young Australians travelling and living together in London where professional and personal networks continuously overlapped.

Chapter 2.3 The Architectural Association of Western Australia and the Origins of the Working Holiday

2.3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the architectural profession in Western Australia during the inter-war years from 1920 -1939 and identifies the conditions which would figure heavily in the working holiday tradition as it developed in the immediate postwar period. Primarily, the chapter documents the development of an independent and influential student association which was formed in response to the lack of formal architectural education available in the state. Western Australia was the last state in Australia to develop a formal diploma course in Architecture.[163] It was not until 1946 when a School of Architecture was established at the Perth Technical College that it began to offer a six year Diploma in Architecture.[164] As the Institute, education department, registration board, and an established generation of architects in WA dragged their feet on initiating a formal education system, the push for a recognized diploma course was instead pursued by a number of articled pupils. As their efforts were continually rebuffed, these pupils organized and formed a student association in 1921, which would go on to have a major influence on architectural education and the profession in WA well into the twentieth century.

The student association became a network that would ultimately support the phenomenon of the working holiday, forging ongoing relationships that would become crucial to its continued success. The chapter recounts the foundation of the Association and the first incarnation of the working holiday as it developed in the 1930s. It highlights a desire to experience modern architecture firsthand, and the need to seek education further afield given the lack of interest from the senior profession as providing the motivation to go abroad. Combined with an increasingly mobile professional class which emerged in the peaceful period between the wars, these factors provided the initial incentive for the working holiday. This chapter focuses on the first group of Association students that traveled to London in the period between 1934 and 1939 and examines how the path they blazed would ultimately lay the foundations for the working holiday phenomenon as it developed in the postwar period.

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[163] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227.
[164] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227. The course began as a six year diploma, but was quickly revised to a five year course.

2.3.2 Founding the Student Association

> There are very few cities of any importance in the world that do not provide some form of training outside actual office experience and the lack of this facility has long been reflected in the standard of "present-day" architecture in Western Australia.[165]
>
> – William Thomas Leighton, 1937.

As leading architect and prominent public figure William Leighton bemoaned, the education system for architects in Western Australia was in a state of disarray and had become somewhat of a strawman for much of the state's perceived architectural failings by the late 1930s. It was a constant source of frustration and debate within the profession and it was not until 1946 that a formal diploma course in architecture was offered, which was by then the last the state in Australia to do so. Until then Western Australia relied entirely on the articled system for architectural training, which saw prospective students indentured to senior architects before sitting examinations and registering with the Institute.[166] The educational offerings within the state at the beginning of the twentieth century were seen as woefully inadequate: there were occasional classes available, including a series of lectures on architecture given within the Bachelor of Engineering at UWA which articled students were able to attend, but little else. Continued attempts to introduce alternatives did not last.[167] This was matched by a lack of publicly available books which students could use to study for the registration exams, with most students having to rely instead on the generosity of private collections to obtain their information.[168] Most other states across Australia had offered some form of education outside the articled system since the late 19th century, and the shambolic state of education within the state was the prompt for the formation of a local student body.

In early 1921 seven student members of the Institute formed the Architectural Students' Association of Western Australia, echoing the development of similar student organizations across

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[165] W.T. Leighton, "School of Architectural Design," *Tee Square Journal* (1937): 28.
[166] Ian Molyneux, "Building in Western Australia 1940-1979," in *Western Towns and Buildings*, eds. John White and Margaret Pitt-Morison (Nedlands: UWA Press, 1979), 137; Richards, *High Hopes*, 51.
[167] "News and Notes," *The West Australian,* July 29, 1921, 6.
[168] "W.A. Institute of Architects," *The Daily News,* April 1, 1921, 1.

the country including VASS in Victoria. [169] The group quickly grew and by July there were already twelve members.[170] While there were a range of motivations guiding the formation of the group, Freeland ascribes the impetus for the association as being for "the sole purpose of having classes of instruction instituted at the Perth Technical College."[171] Initially the Association was formed as a subsidiary of the Institute, and was closely aligned with it. They worked together to improve the standards of education in the state, and the Association would use this close relationship to continually lobby for a formally recognized course in line with advances in Australia and around the world.[172] The Association conducted their meetings within the Institute office and the Institute assisted by arranging informal competitions, design critiques, site visits and lectures for the students.[173] The association was initially a success and participation was enthusiastic, but this was short lived. In 1924 the President of the Institute, E Cohen lamented:

> The Architectural Students' Association has, we fear, made but poor progress during the past year, mainly on the account of dilatory methods and laik of enthusiasm, but at the moment there are signs of renewed interest being taken by its members, and we hope that during the current year much good work may be accomplished.[174]

Throughout the 1920s, the association limped along. Although the numbers of members steadily increased, the general interest and aspirations of the group remained low. They were hampered by the continual lack of support for a formal course, alongside increasingly divergent opinions on teaching methods and architectural ideas between the students and the older generation of practicing architects. This would be a constant source of frustration, particularly as an interest in modernism filtered through to the young student body.[175] By the start of the 1930s, the potential for the Association was picked up again by a new group of students, and a campaign for the

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[169] Richards, *High Hopes,* 68; Also see: Philip Goad, "Designing a Critical Voice: Discourse and the Victorian Architectural Students Society (VASS), 1907-1961," in David Kroll, James Curry and Madeline Nolan, eds. *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 38, *ULTRA: Positions and Polarities Beyond Crisis* (Adelaide: SAHANZ, 2022), 111-122.
[170] "Institute of Architects," *The Daily News,* July 14, 1921, 2.
[171] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227.
[172] Richards, *High Hopes*, 68. See also: "Institute of Architects: Presidential Address," *The Daily News,* July 14, 1921, 2.
[173] "Science of Building: Teaching Architectural Students," *The Daily News,* July 10, 1924, 3.
[174] "Science of Building: Teaching Architectural Students," *The Daily News,* July 10, 1924, 3. The use of 'laik' here is in the original text and possibly intentional rather than a mistake.
[175] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227.

overhaul of the education system was reignited. The most influential of these was efforts was the formation of the Design Atelier, which arose from a movement initiated, in part, by Mervyn Parry.[176]

2.3.3 The Design Atelier

The decision to create a Design Atelier for students arose from a desire to formalise the piecemeal and occasional series of lectures and events that had been held by the Association for the previous decade, and a clear sense that a diploma course was still a long way off. The occasional lectures and critiques offered by the Association, alongside those through the University and Technical College had been of benefit to the student group but had produced little in the way of advancing the formation of a diploma course.[177] The Atelier was an attempt to bypass the current system, providing education within a formal setting, but with no qualification earned. The Atelier began in 1933 and was first run by architect K. Murray Forster. Forster (1907-1967) was born and educated in Victoria, completing his architectural training at the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier (MUAA). After a period in practice, he migrated to Western Australia in 1932 following the construction downturn in Victoria in the depression years. Forster, presumably on the basis of his Melbourne training, was approached to run the atelier, instituting a course model based closely on the MUAA and centred around a Design Class supplemented by a series of lectures, practical work training and an end-of-year examination.[178] The course commenced with an estimated 14 students and teaching duties were shared between Forster and George Alexander Rowe and held in offices leased by the Association in the Forrest Chambers Building on St Georges Terrace.[179] In 1935 Forster returned to Melbourne and William Leighton was installed as the new head of the Atelier in 1937.[180] Leighton had recently returned to Perth following a ten year period working in the eastern states – first completing his training at the University of Sydney's Atelier under Leslie Wilkinson, followed by a period in Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland, where he had enjoyed

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[176] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227.
[177] Other classes offered included construction classes at the Perth Technical College, lectures given by A.R.L. Wright at UWA aimed specifically at 'laymen' and students, and a series of lectures on Building Mechanics. See: "Class Notes," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 24.
[178] "Architectural Atelier," *The West Australian,* May 12, 1934, 5. See also: Julie Willis, "Conscious Design: The Melbourne University Architectural Atelier 1919-1947," *Fabrications* 13, no. 2(2004): 43-62.
[179] A.R.L. Wright, "The Architectural Association of Western Australia," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 11.
[180] "Architectural Design," *The West Australian*, March 13, 1937, 8.

enormous success as an art deco theatre and cinema designer.[181] Leighton's appointment coincided with a shift of the course to the University of Western Australia. Here, it was rebranded as the School of Architectural Design and hosted by the Engineering School, where it was heralded as the first 'permanent' school in the state.[182] However this was short-lived and the course only ran until 1940 when Leighton was mobilized for the war effort.[183]

The Atelier was disbanded, never to return. While it was a welcome addition to architectural education in the state, it did little to divert interest away from the Association's primary goal of a diploma course. Throughout the 1930s students would continually lobby the Institute and worked to introduce a formal course. At least three distinct and complete syllabuses were developed by students and submitted to the Institute for consideration. These were designed to work with either the Technical College or the University, but none progressed passed the council meetings where they were repeatedly shelved.[184] Any advances were rebuffed by the Institute on the grounds of financial issues and an apparent "insufficiency of students."[185] In 1937 Reginald Summerhayes, the President of the Institute, responded to their advances:

> The present system of education of our students has undoubtedly many disadvantages – unfortunately, we have neither the number of students nor the finance to warrant the establishment of an architectural school at the University. The classes that are now available – particularly the Design Class – are responsible for excellent progress, but their scope is definitely limited with the result that at the present time, design alone appears to be taking precedence to the exclusion of most other forms of study.[186]

2.3.4 Building a Culture – Journals, Balls and Dinner.

Following the initial success of the Atelier and with increasing membership numbers, by about 1935 the Association began to change its approach: it was clear that a diploma course was not going to happen anytime soon. From this point onwards, the Association changed from what was

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[181] John Taylor, "William Thomas Leighton," accessed April 15, 2019, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/WT%20Leighton%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf
[182] "Architectural Design," *The West Australian*, March 13, 1937, 8.
[183] "Class Notes," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 24.
[184] Higgin Zink, "Student News and Notes," *The Architect* (March 1940): 37.
[185] Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 227.
[186] Reginald Summerhayes, "Preface," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 1.

essentially a lobby group agitating for a formal course, to a more cohesive and organised club with an increasingly wide range of priorities and commitments. It became a recognizable institutional body, with significant local presence within the profession and it became increasingly vocal as it worked to promote the work of its members. It pushed for architectural progress among members, in line with a broader turn to modernism. As the hope of a formal course all but disappeared, the Association decided to take responsibility for its own architectural ambitions, and relations with the Institute grew progressively hostile.

The Association turned its attention to building a tight knit community of students, creating an active social and professional network that would soon have considerable influence within the profession. Lead by a rotating cast of articled students, they began to increase their distance from the Institute and carved out a clear space in which to learn together and progress the discipline in the way they saw fit. Outside the Atelier, the Association began to organize regular social events which were significant for their ability to draw together the small group of student architects within the city. Initially these were sporting matches, but soon included a series of major parties and events. Most notable of these was the short lived Annual Meal,[187] and the T Square Ball, which became a hugely popular social event in Perth and which took place in May each year, a tradition that began in 1929 and still runs to the present day.[188] These events had the effect of galvanizing the growing student body, and acted as a foil to the more serious operations of the group as they continued to push for improved education standards. But it also cemented the Association as a prominent group within Perth's burgeoning cultural community. The fourth T Square Ball in 1933 had over 250 attendees and by 1941 over 400.[189] It soon became a key event on the Perth social calendar that reached far beyond the architectural community. These events became a crucial aspect of the Association's activities and helped to build a robust and active student group. Once the diploma course was eventually established, these social events became central to the continued success and operation of the Association well into the twentieth century.[190]

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[187] Annual Meal and T Square Ball posters. Private Collection, Geoffrey London.
[188] The association has changed its name several times, but the T Square Ball remains a fixture on the social calendar. There was a T Square Ball held by ALVA, which is the UWA student association, held in 2021.
[189] RV Blatchford, "Annual General Meeting – Retiring President's Report," *The Architect* 1, no. 12 (1942): 18.
[190] Once the diploma course was established, there were still a large number of students who went through the article/examination system, along with those that studied associated disciplines like furniture design and

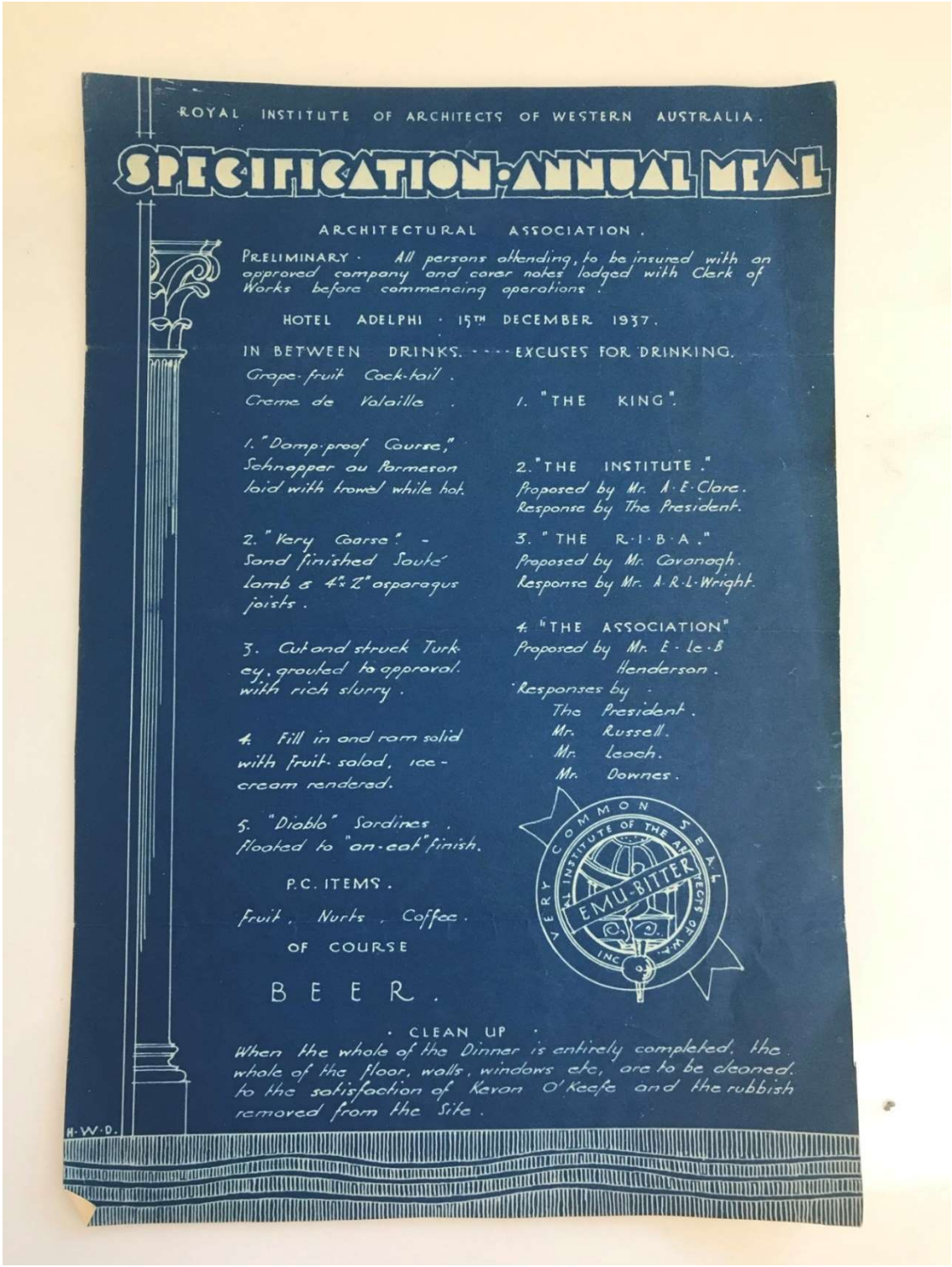

Fig 2.6 Poster for the Specification Annual Meal, 1937. Private Collection, Geoffrey London.

art who would join the association, attracted in part by this strong social network that was established in the late 1930s.

Fig 2.7 Poster for the T Square Ball, 1938. Private Collection, Geoffrey London.

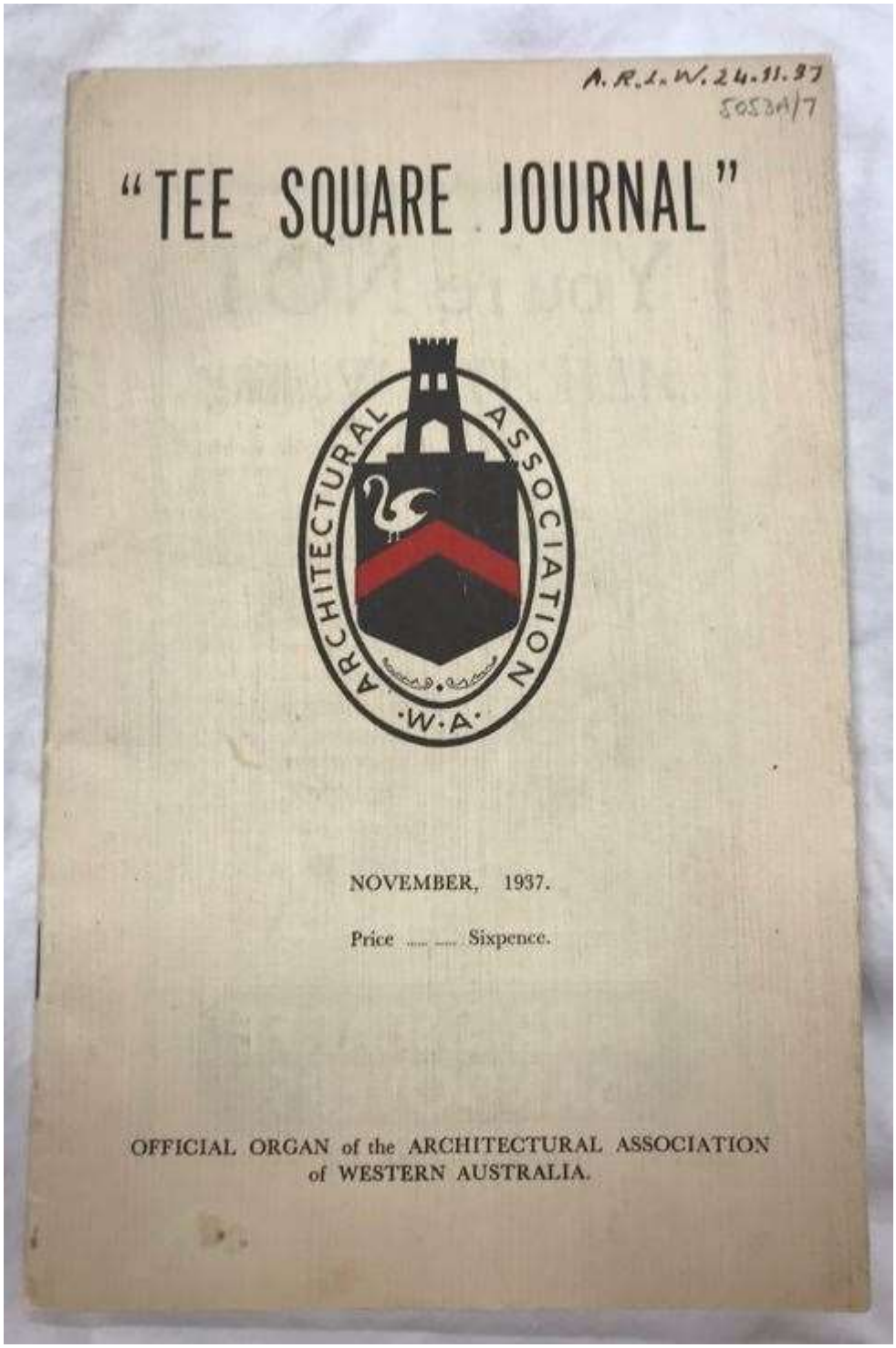

Fig 2.8 Cover of the *Tee Square Journal*, 1937. Warwick Broomfield papers, State Library of Western Australia, ACC 5053A/7.

The community-minded and newly focused intention of the Association is perhaps best illustrated in their decision to produce a journal, *Tee Square Journal: The Official Organ of the Architectural Association of Western Australia*, which was published in November 1937.[191] The journal laid out the intentions of the group which now had clearly identified office bearers and a membership list of more than 40 students. The journal was created, in words of editor Harry W. Downes '"to provide a common outlet and a source of knowledge for the benefit of students – to form a permanent record of business transactions, social functions, sporting engagements, and of all other items of interest to our profession."[192]

Downes', who was also the honorary secretary at the time clearly, was decisive in his editorial in laying out the new direction for the student body, using language befitting the decidedly modern ambitions of the association:

> For years the organization has plodded along in a lethargic trance but now the ancient order hath fallen before the new, and a fresh generation is rising from the ruins of the old regime… The Students of to-day are the architects of to-morrow. For years, many young men studying architecture drifted through studenthood in a blissful haze of architectural illusion, coming to earth with a crash when, at the conclusion of their indentures, they were confronted with the painfully hard facts of life, and that that architecture involved very much more than the mere art of graphical representation of domestic structures. It is just precisely for the circumvention of these circumstances for which the association was created, to give its members training in social and business arenas, to turn adolescent youths (metaphorically speaking) into competent professionals, and introduce them to the trials and tribulations of responsibility.[193]

Beyond this charged editorial, the rest of the journal is rather more straightforward. It contains submissions from senior members of the profession, information about the latest recipient of student awards, a selection of recent student designs and sketches, along with a comic theatrical script and a short definition of surrealism. The journal is of interest for its demonstration of how the social and professional networks of the student body were completely integrated at this stage.

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[191] *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937).
[192] H.W. Downes, "Introduction," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 9.
[193] Downes, "Introduction," 8-9.

This overlap is best expressed in the social notes, comprising a Sports' Page, Class Notes and Ex-Students' Notes, published side-by-side with the architectural critique. These social pages presented an opportunity to track the progression of the Association members and to record the more ephemeral moments of the society. It is evident that the journal functioned as both a clarion call for change and an internal newsletter, and that keeping abreast of current and former students' lives was a priority.

Of particular interest here is the 'Ex-Students' Notes' column, which consists only of a list of former students "who have left the State to further their architectural knowledge and experience".[194] Eight former students are recorded, and seven of the eight are listed as living and working in London. The eighth, CMJ Morgan is recorded as working for Leighton Irwin in Melbourne.[195] The column is the first recorded mention of the working holiday in Western Australia, and it reveals that the journey was already well under way by 1937. That seven former students were already in London pursuing further education and training just after a decade of the Association first began, combined with the clear dissatisfaction of the students about the provision of a diploma course and the alternative educational options, indicates that there was already a widely circulating idea amongst the student body that if one wanted to pursue formal architectural training one needed to pursue this elsewhere. Clearly there were at least two choices by 1937 – Melbourne and London, with London being the obviously favoured choice. The paths that these pioneering seven members of the Association took will be examined shortly, but it is important first to look further into the context which helps to explain why they went.

The lack of educational opportunities provided the underlying impetus to leave in the first place, but this was just one aspect that shaped these nascent excursions overseas. Each student of course had a range of individual motivations for going, but there were a number of external forces which would influence their initial decision to leave. These external forces are particularly useful in identifying why so many students had decided to travel to London, when there were major schools in both Melbourne and Sydney. Partly, London presented an obvious choice for students given the close relationship Western Australian maintained with Britain and the suspicion of the eastern states as identified in Chapter 2. But more directly, this path was likely encouraged by a number of

[194] "Ex-Students' Notes," *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937): 25.
[195] The full list is: Dorothea Hancock at Mews and Davis; GWC Wright at F Jones; AW Bateman at Hall-Jones and Partners; OK Fisher at Sir Gilbert Scott; and DO Sands, MH Parry and GW Finn all working at Welch and Lander. "Ex-Students' Notes," 25.

influential figures connected to the Association and the Atelier like John Joseph Talbot Hobbs, George Parry and Marshall Clifton. All three had either trained in England or undertaken similar training in London and likely extolled the virtues of such a trip to their articled pupils and students.[196] But suggested here is that ultimately the decision to pursue further study and training in London in the 1930s was secured through two major factors: first was an interest in modernity and a desire to experience modern architecture and culture in Europe firsthand, and second, was a wider trend which saw an enormous number of young Australians heading to London in the interwar years for adventure and experience, of which the architecture students formed a small part.

2.3.5 A Desire to be Modern

A dominant factor in the decision to head to London, rather than to the eastern states, was likely tied to a desire to experience modernity directly. Given the unfolding political situation in Europe, the 1930s had seen the UK increasingly become the locus for the developing modern movement as refugees including Erich Mendelsohn, Walter Gropius, and Marcel Breuer amongst others arrived in London, joining leading British architects like Serge Chermayeff, Joseph Emberton, and Connell, Ward and Lucas.[197] It was this charged environment, combined with London's proximity to the continent which afforded easy access to the key buildings of the early modern movement, that made London an increasingly aspirational and attractive destination for young WA architects. The mid 1930s had seen a dramatic shift in architectural sensibilities around the world as the modern movement was transmitted through journals, books, and exhibitions.[198] For receptive young architects in Perth an emerging interest in modernity became the cause of considerable tension. This was an exciting new world that the students could read about, but had no direct access to and they continued to be surrounded by an overwhelmingly conservative profession.[199] As noted before, there was a severe lack of books available for students, and most students were serving articles with an older generation of architects either unfamiliar with the modern

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[196] Details of this British training can be found in: John Taylor, *Between Duty and Design: The Architect Soldier Sir J.J. Talbot Hobbs* (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2014); Barbara Chapman and Duncan Richards, M*arshall Clifton: Architect and Artist* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1989).
[197] Alan Powers, *Britain* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 40.
[198] Philip Goad, "Modernism and Australian Architecture: Part of the Critical Filter," *Docomomo* 29 (September 2003): 61-68.
[199] Richards, *High Hopes*, 81.

movement, or actively dismissive of it.[200] Education at the Atelier equally offered the students little respite given the relative inexperience of the lecturers with the new movement. While some teachers were certainly sympathetic, and expressed a keen interested in the movement's development, they largely lacked the direct experience to satisfy the students.[201] As Duncan Richards has noted, by the mid 1930s there was an observable 'generational divide' between students and the established profession on the matter.[202] Generally the view of the Institute and other influential members of the profession at the time was conservative, and overwhelmingly negative in its assessment of the modern movement.[203] Although few written records remain, it is clear that by 1937, with the publication of the *Tee Square Journal,* the student body was keenly aware of, and interested in, the modern movement. The student designs featured in the Tee Square Journal show a strong interest in a modernist language. Downes's editorial, which describes the "now ancient order hath fallen before the new, and a fresh generation is rising from the ruins of the old regime," speaks directly to an interest in change and modernity.[204] An editorial piece by Association President Robert Blatchford in 1942 makes note of the ageing course material being taught, still largely unchanged from when the Association was established in 1921 and strongly guided by the Institute, which was clearly out of step with a growing interest in modernity, demonstrating that change within the profession was slow:

> The existing "syllabus" – unworthy of the name as it is – was set out in 1921. Since then the radical changes in both design and construction brought about by the sweeping advances in materials and methods have replaced, to a large extent, the old ideals of building and design. It is upon the latter that examinations are based, so it becomes obvious that the "syllabus" of 1921, no matter how incomplete it was then, is now obsolete as well. In short, the student of today has nothing

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[200] Until the mid 1930s, the senior members of the profession largely denounced the movement – See Richards, *High Hopes,* 89.

[201] An example can be found in the work of W.T.Leighton, then lecturer of the Atelier. Leighton wrote a favourable column in The Architect on modern design in 1939, but at the same time practiced in a relatively conservative art deco mode. While he was clearly interested in modernism, he did not have the ability or inclination to practice in that mode. See: W.T. Leighton, "The Trend of Modern Architectural Design," *The Architect* 1, no. 2 (September 1939): 38-39.

[202] Richards, *High Hopes*, 91.

[203] J. K Duncan, the President of the RAIAWA in 1939 noted "anyone can make a building bare, bold and vacuous, and then pride themselves on the "simplicity" of the design." Richards, *High Hopes*, 90.

[204] A selection of the students' designs with clear modern ambition are featured in the *Tee Square Journal* 1(1937).

> concrete upon which to base his examination studies and the examiner nothing on which to base his questions. Surely this is not worthy of a profession, which, by tradition, is supposed to lead in though the nation to which it belongs.[205]

While the schools in Melbourne and Sydney were advanced in their modernist offerings, the ability to travel to London to directly engage with and learn from internationally recognized modern architects would have been a desirable option. Modernism was not widespread in London in the late 1930s, and it was far from mainstream practice, but the firms that this first wave of students sought out in London demonstrate their keen interest in the movement. Members of the Association ended up working for firms including Joseph Emberton, Welch and Lander, and Atkinson and Anderson – all pioneering proponents of an emerging modernist wave in the UK. They practiced a moderate, yet refined version of continental modernism, which would have been an enticing proposition for the arriving students.

[205] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* (March 1942): 17. It is worth noting this was an informal syllabus, likely set up by the Institute and key members of the profession, which was intended to guide the education of students until the advent of the formal course in 1946.

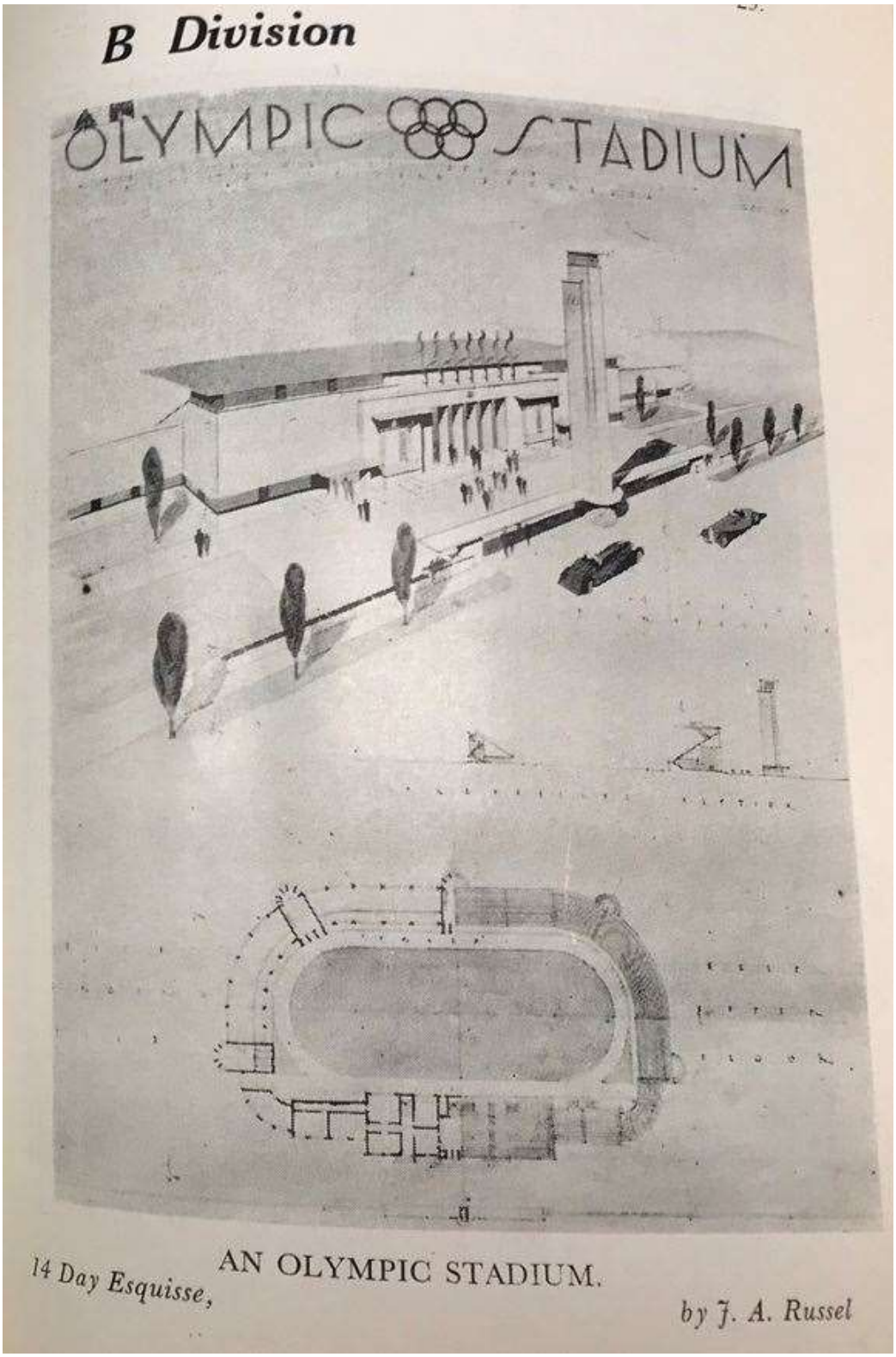

Fig 2.9 'Design for an Olympic stadium' by J.A. Russel, featured in the *Tee Square Journal* (1937).

2.3.6 The First Member Goes – Dorothea Hancock

Architects from the Association did not travel to Britain alone. The interwar period saw a groundswell of young Australians taking advantage of the peacetime conditions and newly installed passenger shipping routes, travelling to Britain for adventure and experience. This saw Association members make the journey across with a number of friends and family members, adding to the sense of adventure and further breaking down the barriers to leave. This is exemplified by the first of the Association students who decided to make the long journey across to London. Mary Dorothea Hancock (1906-1992) was born in Perth to Irish parents, who had emigrated to Western Australia in the late 19th century.[206] Dorothea, as she was known, studied art in Victoria before returning to Perth where she undertook articles with the local firm Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown from 1927 to 1930.[207] During her articles, she took advantage of the lectures available at UWA, studying both art and architectural history, and it was during this time she became involved with the Architectural Association. Hancock was an active member, participating in exhibitions and serving on the social committee responsible for organizing the T Square Balls.[208] She continued to work for Oldham Boas Ednie-Brown, and in 1932 registered with the Architects Registration Board of Western Australia (ARBWA), only the third woman in the state to do so.[209] Around this time, her younger sister Lucy Hope Patricia (Pat) sailed for Britain, and Dorothea followed shortly after, leaving in April 1934 aboard the Orsova, having just received the prestigious E.G. Cohen Medal for that year.[210]

Hancock was motivated to travel to Britain to continue her education and advance her career beyond the limitations of practice available in Perth. But it was unlikely Hancock was travelling to find modernism, given that in 1934 it was still considered a radical style with very few proponents in London, and her student work from that period was in a refined stripped classical style.[211] She travelled during a period of prosperity, peace, and affordable boat tickets, that saw a number of

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[206] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock," Accessed 23 September, 2021, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/MD%20Hancock%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf
[207] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."
[208] "Student Architects Ball in Y.A.L. Hall," *Daily News,* July 25, 1930, 2.
[209] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."
[210] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."
[211] David Saunders makes the note that within a short period of time there is a huge shift in motivation. Those that went in the early 30s were not looking for modernism, but they found it, while by 1936 people were starting to actively seek it out. See: Saunders, "… So I Decided To Go Overseas," 24. Also see: John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."

other young professionals making the trip over, sharing in the excitement of newly available travel. This placed Hancock within a group of newly mobile, young professionals that took advantage of this opportunity to expand their networks and to see the world. It was clearly the thing to do. An article in *The Daily News* provides further context to her leaving:

> What a lot of people are tripping abroad! Enid Russell, who was by the way, Perth's first woman lawyer, intends leaving in a fortnight's time for England. It seems the season for professional women to go in search of England. Dorothea Hancock, one of our few female architects, leaves later on, and Zoe Bennett, another architect, is planning a trip abroad, but her arrangements are not definite yet. Margaret Sharp, the violinist, will leave for England in April.[212]

Hancock arrived in London where she joined her sister Pat, and her brother Neilson John, who had moved to Britain in the early 1920s and was working as an aeronautical engineer.[213] Hancock first travelled extensively, touring as she described "English Cathedral Cities, Scotland, visits of Italy"[214] together with a walking tour of Wales with her friend from Perth Nan Ford.[215] She then found temporary work with S.H. White Consultant Engineers in Westminster, before setting off for a further six week tour of the continent visiting Brussels, Cologne, and the Rhine.[216] In 1935 she joined Mewes and Davis Architects where she would stay until war broke out, living in Bloomsbury and later Streatham with Ford.[217] Whilst working, she studied design at the Bartlett School of Architecture and the Northern Polytechnic, and later took 'Theory of Structures and Materials' at the Regent Street Polytechnic. Upon completion of the course she passed the RIBA examinations and became an associate of the RIBA in 1939. It is not clear what work Hancock undertook while at Mewes and Davis, but given that she was there for at least four years it can be assumed she had a high degree of responsibility by the end of her employment. Mewes and Davis was a traditional practice led by Beaux-Arts trained architects who had made their name in designing a series of

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[212] "Social Chatter," *The Daily News* , January 27, 1934, 14. This type of reportage is typical of the period and demonstrates just how common this trip to London was amongst upwardly mobile professionals. *The West Australian* published a column by 'Halsted' titled "Roundabout London' column in the Woman's Realm section, which detailed all those who went, along with the column in *Social Chatter* shown here.
[213] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."
[214] Mary Dorothea Hancock, RIBA Associate Nomination Form, February 21, 1939. RIBA Collection.
[215] "Chit Chat," *Western Mail,* July 16, 1936, 29.
[216] Mary Dorothea Hancock, RIBA Associate Nomination Form. See also: Halsted, "Roundabout: People and Events," *The West Australian,* July 14, 1936, 5.
[217] Halsted, "Roundabout: People and Events," *The West Australian,* July 14, 1936, 5.

opulent Ritz hotels, including the original Parisian branch in 1898 and London in 1906. One of the projects that was in the office during her time which she likely worked upon was the remodeling of 20 St James' Square, a late 18th century house designed by Robert Adam.[218] Hancock would remain in Britain, where after the interruption of war and a developing fascination with the Steiner education system, she became a school teacher. She later moved to Gloucester where she remained until her death in 1992 designing a Steiner-influenced building at Wynstones Steiner school complete with cast concrete expressionist style canopy.[219]

2.3.7 Parry, Finn and Sands

Hancock had blazed a trail for other Association members wishing to travel, and she was shortly joined by a number of fellow members. In early 1936 Gordon Finn, Desmond Sands, and his sister Felicity Sands, a ballet dancer, travelled to England together aboard the Ormonde and the three shared a flat in Earls Court for their first year of living in London.[220] Like Hancock, Finn and Sands also had familial motivations for leaving. Finn's brother, Arthur, was a Rhodes scholar then studying at Oxford, while Sands' sister Felicity had travelled to continue her dancing career, studying ballet and later becoming a member of the Royal Academy of Dance.[221] It is likely that Finn and Sands joined up with Hancock upon their arrival, as Finn and Hancock in particular had been close friends in Perth. They had served together on various T Square Ball organizing committees,[222] and when Hancock was admitted to the RIBA as an associate in 1939, Finn accompanied her to the ceremony in London.[223]

The pair were quickly able to find work. Within a week of arriving Sands entered the office of Welch and Lander, while Finn joined Collcutt and Hamp. While at Collcutt and Hamp, Finn worked on the remodeling of 25 Grosvenor Square, Mayfair for Lady Cecilia Baillie and Sir Adrian Baillie, a conservative project, where he worked closely with lead partner Stanley Hamp on the project until

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[218] This is one of the few Mewes and Davis projects published from this time: "The Old and the New Adam," *The Architectural Review* 84, no. 502 (1938): 104-106. Further connection with Hancock lies in the fact that the lead architect on the project was Charles Gage, who was a nominator on Hancock's RIBA associate nomination form.
[219] John Taylor, "Mary Dorothea Hancock."
[220] Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989. Interview transcript, Curtin University of Technology, School of Architecture, Construction and Planning Resource Centre collection.
[221] "Woman's Realm," *The West Australian,* February 5, 1937, 6.
[222] "Student Architects Ball in Y.A.L Hall," *Daily News,* July 25, 1930, 2.
[223] Halsted, "Woman's Realm: Roundabout London," *The West Australian,* May 22, 1939, 8.

its completion.[224] Finn didn't stay long though, and soon joined Sands in the decidedly modern Welch and Lander office. Collcutt and Hamp had only dabbled in the modern movement, but were otherwise happy to deploy a range of styles across their projects.[225] By contrast, Welch and Lander were a leading modern practice. Both Felix Lander and Herbert Welch had worked for Raymond Unwin on various garden city schemes, and Welch had previously partnered with Frederick Etchells to design one of the first modern movement office buildings in London, Crawford's Advertising (1930).[226] At the time that Finn and Sands were in the office, the practice had just completed the Park Royal underground station (1936), which was a striking Dudok style modernist composition in brick.[227]

Fig 2.10 Welch and Lander, Park Royal Station, 1936. Source: Modernism in Metroland. https://www.modernism-in-metroland.co.uk/park-royal.html

[224] Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989.
[225] Staley Hamp is perhaps best remembered for the striking early modern house 'Whitelands' in Beaconsfield (1933) but rarely returned to the style.
[226] See: William Crawford, "Number 233 High Holborn: My New Building is of the Present," *The Architects' Journal* 72, no. 1867(1930): 652-656.
[227] "Modernism in Metroland," Accessed 2 June, 2022. https://www.modernism-in-metroland.co.uk/park-royal.html

They were soon joined by Mervyn Parry, one of the students influential in the opening of the Atelier and a prominent member of the Association. Parry sailed on December 16, 1936 aboard the cargo vessel M.V. Tolten, which, loaded with wheat, wool and frozen lamb, sailed for London, via the Cape, arriving in Hull six weeks later.[228] Upon arrival in London he met up with Sands and Finn and the three moved into a house together in Lancaster Gate.[229] Parry immediately registered with the RIBA as a student member and joined Welch and Lander in their Portman Square office, clearly on the encouragement of Sands and Finn.[230] The trio stayed in that office for varying lengths before branching off into other practices, but almost always following each other. Parry stayed with Welch and Lander for a year, before he and Sands moved to the office of Robert Atkinson and AFB Anderson, working directly under Atkinson who had recently retired as Director of Education at the Architectural Association.[231] Atkinson's office of the 1930s was a successful modern practice with a moderately sized office and employed a large number of Australians on a seemingly regular rotating basis.[232] After six months, Parry was forced to leave Atkinson's given that by late 1939 war had forced the office to a standstill.[233] He then took a job in the office of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, where he worked on the relocation of their own offices given war-time demands.[234] Parry's daughter, Siobhan Hewitt, retains a letter written by Edwin McAlpine to Parry many years later, and it provides some detail of the kind of work Parry undertook for the firm, and the esteem in which he was held. McAlpine wrote to him: "I was delighted to hear from you. I am constantly reminded of your time here by the fact that I have made absolutely no alteration to the office which you designed for me. I think you did a wonderful job. Both our Boardroom and my office remain most peaceful and workmanlike rooms which give me great pleasure."[235]

Finn left Welch and Lander and found employment in the office of leading British modernist Joseph Emberton, who then had a small office of about six people. Emberton was a pioneer of the modern movement in Britain, and had attracted international attention for his 1931 Royal Corinthian Yacht Club which was featured in Hitchcock and Johnsons 'Modern Architecture:

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[228] "M.V.Tolten: A ship with history," *South Western Times,* December 9, 1936, 5.
[229] Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989.
[230] Statutory declaration of employment, Mervyn Parry, 1998. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.
[231] Gavin Stamp, "Robert Atkinson 1883-1952: AA Members Room and Bar," *AA Files,* 20(1990): 69.
[232] See: Saunders, "… So I Decided To Go Overseas,". Saunders lists 14 Australians that went through the office between 1936- 45.
[233] Letter from Atkinson and Anderson's office to Mervyn Parry, 29th September 1939. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.
[234] Statutory declaration of employment, Mervyn Parry, 1998. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.
[235] Letter from Edwin McApline to Mervyn Parry, 14th October, 1963. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.

International Exhibition' at MOMA in 1932.[236] Finn worked for three months on the planning sketches for a project in Blackpool,[237] but left to take the opportunity to travel the continent with a Sydney architect who had worked in the Welch and Lander office, Harold Orr.[238] When Finn left the Emberton office to go travelling, his position was taken over by Sands, who would stay on for more than a decade, eventually becoming a partner in the practice.[239] Finn recalled the experience in Emberton's office as short but significant, but he suggested the real value for him was the exposure the office provided him to other leading British modern architects involved with the MARS Group such as Maxwell Fry, Tecton and Serge Chermayeff, who he met.[240]

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[236] Powers, *Britain,* 36-37.

[237] Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989. Finn only mentions that he worked on the 'Blackpool pavilion' but it is not clear which of Emberton's suite of Blackpool "Pleasure Beach' buildings he refers to, but it is likely the Casino (1940).

[238] Harold W. Orr was a graduate of Sydney Technical College, and upon receipt of Board of Architects NSW Australian Medallion and Travelling Scholarship, had moved to London where he ran a successful practice for many years, before the war interrupted proceedings. Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989;

[239] Duncan Richards, Interview with G.W. Finn, August 25, 1989; Russell Jack, *The Work of the N.S.W. Government Architect's Branch, 1958-1973* (Masters dissertation, University of Sydney, 1980), 34.

[240] Simon Anderson and Meghan Nordeck, eds., *G.W. Finn: Architectural Photographs and Projects* (Nedlands: School of Architecture and Fine Arts, University of Western Australia, 1995), 6.

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Fig 2.11 Joseph Emberton, Blackpool Pleasure Beach Casino, 1937-1940. Part of the Blackpool suite of buildings completed by Emberton and on which G.W. Finn worked. Photographer: Edward Stewart Bale, RIBA pix RIBA2936-28.

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Fig 2.12 Portrait of Desmond Sands. *The Architects' Journal* 96, no. 2469 (May 21, 1942): 352.

Following Hancock's lead, both Sands and Parry took the opportunity to pursue further education while in London at the Regent Street Polytechnic. Sands completed his studies and passed his exams while working with Emberton, which allowed him to register with the RIBA in 1940.[241] By the middle of 1940 war had forced their hands, interrupting both their studies and working abilities. Parry had enrolled in the evening school at the Polytechnic from 1938 to 1940 but given the outbreak of war, was forced to postpone his subsequent ambition to sit the examination for the RIBA associateship.[242] Finn had returned to Perth in 1939, having travelled extensively across Britain, Europe and America, but both Sands and Parry remained in London where they joined the war effort. Parry joined the RAF in 1940 and served in Training Command and then 5-Group of Bomber Command served as a squadron leader.[243] Sands also became an active solider, joining the RAF as a fighter pilot where he made air raids over Germany, was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, before being captured and held as a Prisoner of War for three months.[244]

Following the war in 1945 Parry took up a role as an assistant working within the Oxford Shire Council, and transferred his studies to the School of Technology in Oxford. There, he studied under the direction of E.M. Rice, while he also took a correspondence course in Architecture run from London through St Catherine's College at Cambridge by C.W. Box in order to prepare for the RIBA examinations. Both his studies and work were completed by the end of 1946, and he finally passed his examination and was admitted to the RIBA at the end of 1946.[245] In February 1947 he sailed back to Perth, going straight into practice with his father George Herbert as Parry and Parry. In 1945 Sands returned to Emberton's office, but ultimately decided to return to Perth in July 1951 with his wife Dorothea.[246]

The exploits of the other association members listed in the *Tee Square Journal* in London are less well known. It notes GWC (Wyndham) Wright, working in the office F Jones, AW (Wes) Bateman at

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[241] John Taylor, "Desmond Ossiter Sands," Accessed 18 November, 2020. https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/DO%20Sands%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf
[242] Letter to Mervyn Parry from the Regent Street Polytechnic, 27 July 1945. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.
[243] John Taylor, "Mervyn Henry Parry," Accessed 18 November, 2020, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/MH%20Parry%20for%20AIA%20_WA_.pdf
[244] John Taylor, "Desmond Ossiter Sands."
[245] Statutory declaration of employment, Mervyn Parry, 1998. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt. It is not clear whether the RIBA accreditation was of benefit to those students that travelled in the 1930s upon their return to Perth, but it certainly would have provided them with some level of authority and distinction.
[246] Shipping Records, also: "D.S.O. Award," *The West Australian,* July 2,1945, 4. Sands' role in the Emberton office needs further study, but was beyond the scope of this project.

Hall-Jones and Partners, and Osborne Kirkton Fisher who was in the office of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.[247] Only Osborne Fisher (1913-1941) left any trace of his working holiday. He had arrived in London in 1936 with his family and had worked for five years in the Gilbert Scott office on a 'big architectural project' during which he was admitted as an associate of the RIBA.[248] Fisher returned to Perth, where he was then called up for service with the RAAF and sadly died in an aircraft accident during training in 1941.[249]

2.3.8 The Association During the War

The visibility of the trips abroad made by Association members was enhanced by the arrival in June 1939 of *The Architec*t, the official chapter journal of the RAIAWA. *The Architect* provided space in each issue for the Association to publish a notes column, affectionately called 'Ye Stoodents' Column' in the first issue. Clearly the *Tee Square Journal* had not been viable, as it folded after the first issue, but with significant space now allocated to them in the Institute's main journal, there was seemingly no need. In the first issue, 'Ye Stoodents' Column' makes a point of listing those over working in London.[250] Joining those already travelling was Ray Petersen who would also join the RAF as a pilot officer, alongside Parry and Sands, making 7 Association members in London.[251] The column featured regular running updates on those either travelling or returning, reporting on their exploits with keen interest and a strong theme of exchange appears, not only who was over there, but also what they did when they returned. [252] Through these columns it is clear that the students and ex-members of the Association remained in close contact while abroad, writing letters and sending updates home as they went. At the end of 1939 a typical note reads:

> During the past few months, many of our old friends have returned from England and the Continent, all packed to the back teeth with new ideas and a gas mask. Wes. Bateman and Gordon Finn, are now administering liberal potions of brand

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[247] "Ex-Students' Notes," *Tee Square Journal* (1937): 25.
[248] "Former Perth Boy tells of England's confidence: No One speaks of defeat there," *Sunday Times,* July 7, 1940, 13.
[249] "Personal," *The West Australian,* December 15, 1941, 6.
[250] "Architects, Architecture and the Stimulating Effect on the Social Fabric," *The Architect* 1, no. 1(June 1939): 26.
[251] "On Military Service: At Home and Abroad," *The Architect* 1, no. 12(March 1942): 14.
[252] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* 1, no. 12(March 1942): 18. As an example, this column notes a lecture given by the returning AW Bateman on English architecture.

> new Architecture to the Public Works Department, whilst Wyndham Wright – also of the Public Works Department – is being administered liberal potions of brand new cooking by a brand new Mrs. Wright. Congratulations Wyndham!... Fred. Shaw. B.Sce., Eng. – and evidently £.s.d., Stlg. – left Perth in September last to bolster up the Engineering fraternity at Oxford. Fred. Is interested in aeronautical design as well as Architecture, so we should get some rather "fast buildings" in the future.[253]

But with the outbreak of war in 1939 travel ceased and any mentions in the student column quickly disappeared. While many students remained over in the UK, either working or engaged in the war effort, the students' column ceased to report their activities as their priorities had clearly shifted to the war effort.

As the war effort dragged on, the activities of Association members both locally and overseas were dramatically reduced. Some students began to make their way over east, given the difficulty of overseas travel, but this trend largely ended with the cessation of fighting. Through these difficult years, the Association continued to attract new members and worked on strengthening the social function of the society. Almost the only proactive thing that could be done during the enormous pressure of wartime, social events would prove to be fruitful and they helped the Association emerge from the war in a healthy position.[254] Through the war the society held regular card nights and sporting events - many under the guise of fundraising for the Red Cross - along with the Tee Square Balls and exhibitions, which tied the society together in difficult circumstances.[255]

The Association continued their attack on the Institute and the Architects Board over the lack of a diploma course during the quiet periods of the war. If nothing else, the war years seemed to have accelerated the interest of the Association to further its distance from the Institute, with little else to do apart from socialize and continually push for a diploma course which would seemingly never eventuate. Higgin Zink, a pseudonym of an unidentified member of the Association, opens the March 1941 student column of *The Architect* with one of these provocations: "The time has come to take up the cudgel again. Another year has started and still there is no sign of an architectural course in Western Australia. All the good work done in recent years by the students in the hope of

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[253] Higgin Zink, "Students' News and Views," *The Architect* 1, no. 3(December 1939): 38.
[254] "Student Notes," *The Architect* (March 1946): 18.
[255] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* (December 1941): 14.

starting a course has again come to nought, in much the same fashion as the proposals of other times."[256] A year later, the President of the Students Association for 1941-42 Robert Blatchford, penned a scathing letter attacking the Institute and published in *The Architect* which asked, "Is the Institute committing Harakiri?":

> Although few realise it, unless some radical changes are made very shortly in the architectural educational system of this State the already thinning ranks of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects will become invisible, and that body will cease to exist altogether... Examine the record of the Institute over the past few years. There was no quorum at the 1941 annual general meeting; no general meetings are held because no one seems sufficiently interested to attend; no, or at any rate few, students after qualifying at the Board's examination bother to further their acquaintance with the Institute, and no members seem very vitally affected by the above state of affairs; in short, its numbers and powers are decreasing and no one is taking the trouble (or is it interest?) to alter the present trend of events.
>
> The Architectural Students' Association is, on the other hand, a live organization, having its own classes, outings and functions – it has good attendances at its meetings, whether annual or general, and its annual T-Square Ball is now one of the most popular functions of the year. Ignoring the war effects – these apply equally to both bodies – why is it then that there is such a marked contrast in the spirit of the two kindred bodies, and what can be done to arouse enthusiasm in the older organization?[257]

A reading of the student column over the war years indicates that the relationship between the student body and the Institute had considerably soured. There is an antagonism in the student columns that is frankly astonishing given the permission to be published within the Institute's own journal. The missives launched by leading members of the Association serve to show the increasing desire for autonomy by the Association and the distance it would work to maintain from the Institute in the future.

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[256] Higgin Zink, "Students' News and Views," *The Architect* (March 1940): 37.
[257] R.V. Blatchford, "Is the Institute Committing Harakiri?" *The Architect* (September 1941): 16-17.

As the diploma course was eventually introduced in 1946 – in the end a result of joining the national Institute rather than student lobbing – the Association took on a different character again and would distance themselves from the Institute's activities. This autonomy would become a significant factor in the shaping of the working holiday in the 1950s, as it developed through the strong social bonds forged in these wartime years. The independence of the student body was a trend that would strengthen in the postwar years and became a defining feature of Western Australia's architecture culture. While other states had strong student groups, the most visible being VASS in Victoria, these quickly lost steam in the postwar period, typified by VASS which collapsed entirely by 1960.[258] By contrast, the student association in WA only grew stronger, lasting well into the 1970s, and it maintained a commanding presence within the architectural community and this will be a theme which runs throughout this thesis.

2.3.9 Interpretation

Through the dissatisfaction with available education opportunities locally and a distrust of the Institute, the Association instigated and established the trend of heading abroad for professional progress in the 1930s. It was within the Association that a mindset developed where students became responsible for their own development and training, helping each other to further their own education. As the Institute and the Architects' Registration Board took control of the diploma course and education in the early postwar years, the Association would continue to encourage its members to travel abroad, and maintained an informal education program to supplement what the institutions could offer. As the next chapters will show, the student association became the generative force which drove the working holiday tradition in the 1950s, transforming it from the sporadic trips of the interwar years into a semi-institutionalized phenomenon. Much of this was achieved through the increasingly dense web of personal networks maintained by the students. An early example of this is illustrated through the strong overlap between Hancock, Sands, Parry and Finn, which saw the relationships they had developed in their formative years in the Association, continued and amplified while in London.

The working holiday as it developed in the postwar years, and the focus of the following chapters, is markedly different in character to those undertaken by Hancock, Sands, Parry, and Finn. Students went for shorter periods and in larger groups. Seeking out education abroad all but

[258] Goad, "Designing a Critical Voice," 122.

disappeared in the 1950s, and the desire to engage with modernity shifted as the movement became mainstream. Travelling with family became rare and was replaced with friends and colleagues. But the pioneering work done by those early members of the Association set in motion a tradition that would only continue to gather pace, often with direct influence of those pioneering travelers. Returned travelers like Parry, Sands and Finn used their experience in London to assist future students to continue on this path through the form of letters, introductions and recommendations. Many of them would also take up influential roles within the profession, as teachers at the Perth Technical College and also as leading practitioners where they would continue to maintain a close relationship with the Association members. Examples of the relationships formed in the interwar period that would have direct effects on later generations can be found in letters scattered throughout personal archives that were examined for the thesis. In the private archive of Mervyn Parry is a letter from Alexander TB Anderson, who Parry had worked for when he was in partnership with Robert Atkinson. Atkinson had died in 1952 and Anderson continued to run the business in Atkinson's name. Writing to Parry in 1959, two decades after Parry had worked there, and Parry with a successful practice of his own, Anderson responded to a letter Parry had sent. He writes

> The immediate purpose of this letter is to let you know that if you know of any young Australian architects who are contemplating a spell in the Old Country we are recruiting Staff for a very large modern office building on which we are about to start the preparation of plans. We would be very grateful for any help you can give us in this respect.[259]

It is likely that Parry would have passed on these details, and even used them as encouragement for later students to travel. The private Parry archive, held by his daughter Siobhan Hewitt also contains a letter of recommendation from Marshall Clifton to his former employee E. Vincent Harris, that he gave to Parry before he sailed.[260] When Ross Chisholm sailed for London in 1954 he took with him two letters of recommendation from Desmond Sands for his previous employer Joseph Emberton and L.C Holbrook of Riches and Blythin. In his note to Chisholm regarding the two letters, Sands wrote: "Emberton has a lot of work on still when I last heard from

[259] Letter from A.T.B. Anderson to Mervyn Parry, 21 December 1959. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.
[260] Letter from Marshall Clifton to E. Vincent Harris, 16 December 1936. Private Collection, Siobhan Hewitt.

him…although he probably has more useful contacts in London than any other architect…. [Holbrook] used to employ Australians in his office and always had a high opinion of them."[261]

2.3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the early machinations of the working holiday as it was experienced by members of the Student Association in the inter war years. This was a period which saw the Student Association become an increasingly important group within the Western Australian architectural community, and became responsible for the initiation, and continuation, of the working holiday. Borne out of a frustration with the Institute and the lack of formal education, the Association brought a disparate group of articled students together and advocated for its members to travel abroad in order to further their education. This desire was compounded by an interest in experiencing the modern movement at the source, and through the added pressure from family members and friends who were also seeking out experience and adventure abroad, enabled by newly affordable shipping fares. World War II would provide a clear break from travel, but with the cessation of war in 1945, the long journey to Britain was soon filled with new members of the Association, clutching their letters of recommendation and ambition for adventure.

[261] Letter of Recommendation from Desmond Sands to Ross Chisholm, 4 February 1954. Private collection, Katrina Chisholm.

Chapter 3 The Working Holiday

This chapter examines three different aspects of the working holiday in the UK as it was experienced in the 1950s – getting there, working there, and living there. Section 3.1 documents aspects of the working holiday that took place before the graduates arrived and began working in the UK. Section 3.2 recounts the students' experiences of working within the UK - the practices they worked for, the projects they worked on, and the contribution that they made to the British architectural profession. Finally, Section 3.3 looks at the experience of living in the UK, particularly their time spent in London, and the formative experiences they had outside of the architectural office. It examines where they lived, who they lived with, what they did for leisure, and where they traveled to. Together, these three chapters articulate the broad range of experiences that the graduates had while living and working in the UK, and which would have a profound and lasting influence on their own architectural practices and lives upon their return to Western Australia.

Chapter 3.1 Getting There

3.1.1 Introduction

This chapter examines firstly the changes within the Perth architectural profession that enabled the working holiday to develop and flourish in the years following the cessation of war in 1945. Most prominent of these was the arrival of the diploma course in 1946 at Perth Technical College headed by W.H. Robertson. Robertson, who had also worked in the UK during the interwar years, would become an influential figure in the local scene, and actively encouraged his students to follow the path to London. It examines the influence of senior members of the profession, and a series of travelling scholarships that were introduced to further encourage students to travel.

The journey taken from Perth to the UK is examined here in detail. For many, the journey itself was of equal importance to their time spent in London. It was the first time they had left Australia - often the first time leaving Perth - and their first encounter with the richness and diversity of global culture. In the 1950s the journey to the UK remained a slow and arduous journey, taking four weeks to sail from Fremantle to Tilbury. This meant that many took the opportunity to extend the already lengthy journey. For some this meant alighting at a port in Europe like Naples or Athens before spending several months winding their way across Europe, soaking up as much of the buildings, food, and culture that they could afford. For others they took advantage of their status as Commonwealth members and travelled to Africa where they found work in South Africa, Tanganyika, and Zimbabwe adding further experience to their portfolios before arriving in London. Others worked their way across, taking up roles as junior seaman on board cargo ships in order to save on their fare. The trip across would provide some of the most lasting and memorable experiences for the young graduates and helped to prepare them for their time living and working in the UK.

3.1.2 Early Movements

During World War II the movement between the UK and Western Australia by members of the Association had all but ceased. There were several members still in the UK, including Hancock, Parry and Sands, who would resume their careers once peace was restored, but in the period between 1939 and 1945 the flow of travelers towards Britain stopped entirely. But it did not take long for the first group of Perth architects to resume their travels to the UK. The first new group of Association members to embark on a working holiday were Margaret Feilman and Kenneth

Broadhurst, followed a year later by John Mercer. Feilman left in September 1948 having been awarded a British Council Scholarship to study town planning at the University of Durham, and Broadhurst left around the same time for London, where he worked with Searle and Searle and later Brian O'Rorke.[262] Notes home from the pair were regularly published in the Student Column indicating that they both continued to maintain close contact with the Association while abroad. As the first group of new students to travel, their experience was clearly of interest to those in Perth who were eager to follow in their footsteps.

> Letters from Margaret Feilman and Ken Broadhurst will be read at the next Association Meeting. In brief they point out how interesting it is in England and how nice life is in Perth. Both were grateful recipients of our food parcels as Xmas. Margaret says there's plenty of hard work; Ken pines for sunshine, but I guess if you want to know, you've got to go.[263]

Feilman, Broadhurst, and Mercer were the last vestiges of the interwar holiday model. In going over individually, and seeking out further education, their experiences were closer to that of Parry or Finn than those that would travel in the early 1950s. With the arrival of the diploma course offered at the Perth Technical College, the nature of the working holiday would be changed forever. The first cohort of students to graduate from PTC who set out for England shortly after completing their studies would essentially codify the working holiday. These students provided a model for future graduates to follow and established an increasingly dense network of connections with which future travelers could engage as the bonds of the Association continued to strengthen.

3.1.3 W.H Robertson and the Diploma Course at PTC

> First I would like to continue the late W. H. Robertson's plea and urge students, specially [sic] the younger ones, to make it their aim to go abroad when their course is completed. The benefits gained from such travel, specially [sic] from an Architect's point of view, are obvious and in every way enormous, so, when a

[262] T. Hall and R. Reilly, Interview with Kenneth Broadhurst, November 8, 1980. Interview transcript, Curtin University of Technology, School of Architecture, Construction and Planning Resource Centre collection.
[263] "Architectural Students' Association: Students' Notes," *The Architect* (March 1949): 26.

> student does decide to go, my advice is attempt to do it properly and so get the most out of such an experience….[264]

This quote is an excerpt of a report written in 1954 by John Lidbury, several months into his eighteen-month working holiday in Britain and published in *The Architect*. Lidbury had been awarded the newly established W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant, and a requirement of the award was to publish regular updates in the journal to share the progress of his journey with those at home. The quote is illuminating as it reveals so much about the evolving nature of the working holiday in the postwar period, and how only eight years after the war, the holiday was already perceived as an assumed part of a student's education. As Lidbury writes, it was a case of *when*, not *if*, a student decides to go. Integral to understanding this shift in attitude was in the long awaited arrival of the diploma course at Perth Technical College and the influence of the inaugural head of school, W.H. Robertson.

In the end, after the intense lobbying from the Association for over two decades, the diploma course was established not on the back of their pressure. Rather, the Institute's hand was forced on the matter having finally joined the national body, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), which required the provision of a nationally recognised diploma course as a matter of admission.[265] In February 1946 Perth Technical College welcomed the first students into this newly formed five year diploma course, which allowed them to graduate with an Associateship in Architecture and be eligible for automatic registration with the Architects Registration Board of WA (ARBWA).[266] The course consisted of two years full time study and then three years of part time study. In the final three years the students would attend class one day a week, along with two night classes, while working four days a week in a local practice as architectural assistants.[267] The course was practical in nature, with an emphasis on learning the realities of architectural construction and the building site. Accordingly, the architecture classrooms were on the top floor

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[264] J.D. Lidbury, "W.H.Robertson Memorial Travel Grant: Report No. 1," *The Architect* (September 1954): 15-16.
[265] Freeland, *The Making a Profession*, 227.
[266] Barbara van Bronswijk, "Recapping the past: Fifty years of the teaching of Architecture at Perth Technical College, The Western Australian Institute of Technology and Curtin University of Technology, 1946-1996," in *Visions and Voices: Curtin University Celebrates 50 years of Architectural Education 1946-1996,"* ed. Barbara van Bronswijk (Bentley: Curtin University, 1996), 16.
[267] John White, "John White 1927-2020, My Life in Architecture, Student Days," in *1960 Before and Beyond: Architectural Students at Perth Technical College,* ed. K.A. Adam (Mount Claremont: D.G. Newman, 2020), 390.

of the newly design Trades Block of the PTC on Bazaar Terrace in the city centre, sharing the space with plumbing, welding and sheet metal work students.[268] Alongside history and art, students were taught drawing, lettering and structural mechanics under the tutelage of German Engineer Erich Shilbury, which meant students had a sound knowledge of structural engineering upon graduation. Shilbury, who had worked with Felix Samuely before emigrating to Australia, insisted on "the highest standard of understanding."[269] They also attended trade classes, where they learnt hands-on the art of bricklaying, carpentry, glazing and tiling.[270] Ronald Bodycoat recalls the course was essentially taught in the 19th century Beaux Arts tradition, and students learnt "the disciplines of that tradition and the essential skills of communication through drawing."[271] The school was headed by William Haydyn Robertson (1905-1953), or Robbie as he was affectionately known, who had been appointed as the inaugural Lecturer in Charge. Robertson was supported by full-time assistants Arnold Camerer and Alan Douglas, and was shortly joined by Margaret Pitt-Morison.[272]

Robertson was the driving force of the school and became an influential and highly respected figure in the local community, particularly to the first cohort of students he steered through the course. He was also instrumental in encouraging students to travel abroad. Robertson had been trained at the University of Melbourne, receiving his Diploma of Architecture in 1927, before travelling to London. In 1928 he completed further studies at the Bartlett School of Architecture Atelier under the supervision of Professor Albert Richardson and Hector Corfiato while working in the office of Sir Aston Webb and Sons, then a Royal Academician and architect to King George V.[273] Robertson spent two years in Webb's office, before travelling across Canada where he worked for two years with John Smith Archibald, before travelling across the US and Europe, returning to Australia in 1933. After a period in Melbourne spent in private practice, he moved to Western Australia in 1935 where he joined the Public Works Department (PWD) in Western Australia. There he would remain for more than a decade before he was offered the position at PTC. During his

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[268] van Bronswijk, "Recapping the Past," 15.
[269] John White, "John White," 393. The connection between Samuely and Shilbury is also explored in: Peter Bruechle, Interviewed by Julia Wallis, UWA Oral History Collection, November 2014. Accessed 23 October, 2021, https://oralhistories.arts.uwa.edu.au/items/show/82
[270] John White, "John White," 393
[271] Ronald Bodycoat, "Reflections of a Practitioner – 40 years on," in *Visions and Voices: Curtin University Celebrates 50 years of Architectural Education 1946-1996,"* ed. Barbara van Bronswijk (Bentley: Curtin University, 1996), 33.
[272] van Bronswijk, "Recapping the Past," 15.
[273] Particulars Concerning the Qualifications Etc. of William H. Robertson. State Records Office of Western Australia AU WA S24-cons 16543 1945/0084.

time at the PWD Robertson became a vocal and well-known member of the profession and was an early and prominent proponent of modern architecture in the state. In 1943 he initiated a local chapter of the Modern Architectural Research Society (MARS), modelled on the British version, of which he remained chairman until his untimely death in 1953, where he would publicly agitate the case for modern housing.[274]

Fig 3.1 Award ceremony at Perth Technical College, 1949. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

[274] William Robertson, "Is a High Ceiling Cool?" *The Workers Star,* December 1, 1944*,* 4.

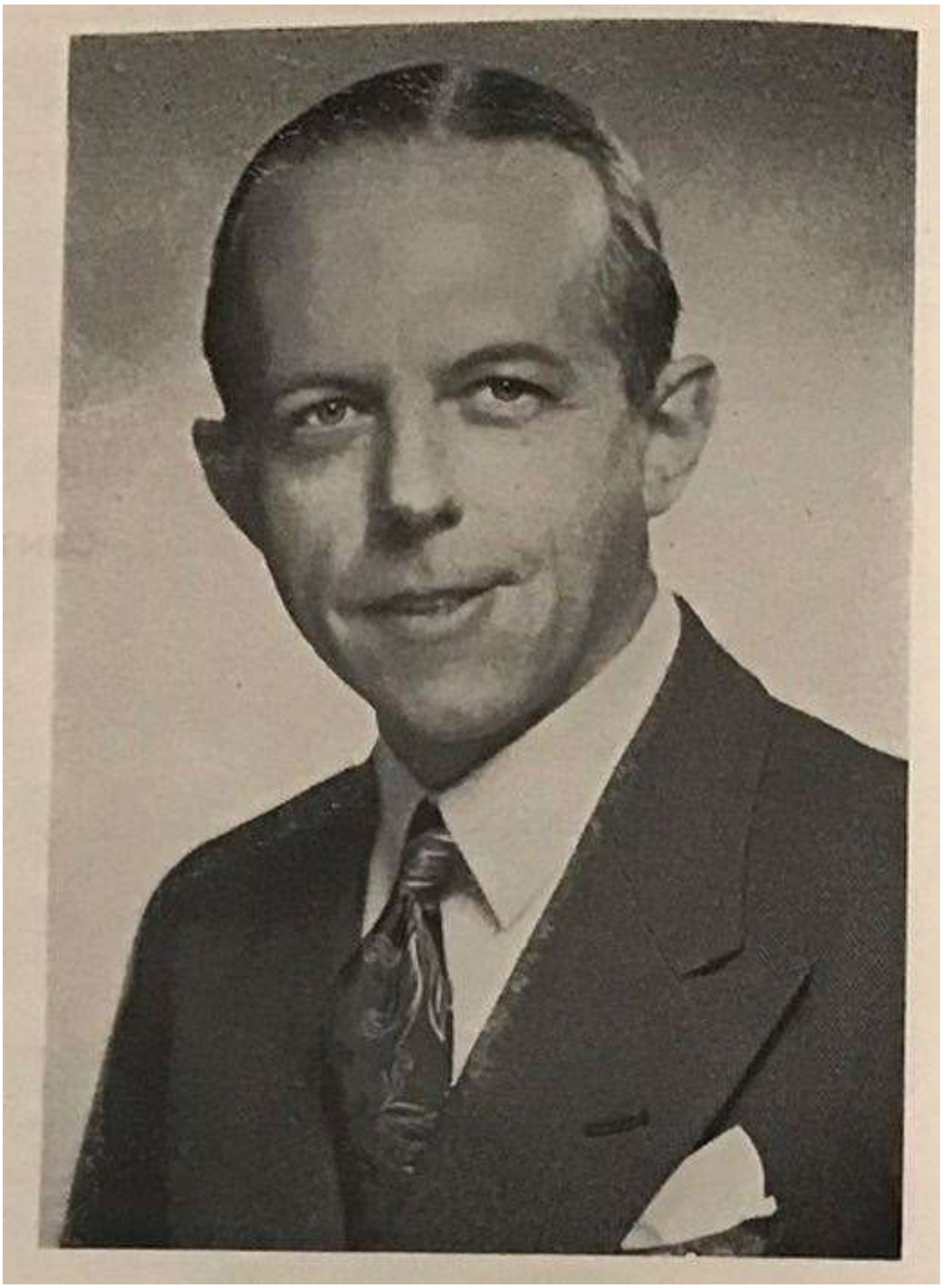

Fig 3.2 William Haydyn Robertson. *The Architect* (March 1953): 10.

The five years that Robertson spent working overseas were formative, and he would emphasise the value of overseas experience to his students, encouraging them at any opportunity to follow the same path after graduation. He had an "ever firm belief in the value of foreign travel", particularly regarding work experience and as Lidbury notes above, he was always pushing students to look further afield to develop their careers.[275] One of Robertson's students, John Duncan recalled, "There was an expectation, certainly an anticipation [about going overseas]. This was one of the things that Robbie did get us to view as being an integral part of our training was to get away in due course."[276] He was extremely proud of those students that followed his lead, and made sure to share their success with the students and public alike.[277] Gil Nicol, one of the seven students in the inaugural graduating class of 1950, left immediately for a working holiday in Britain and Robertson was keen to make an example of him. Robertson sent out a press release to the local newspaper which carefully detailed his trip, paying special attention to his experience working for the modern practice Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall, then known for their progressive school designs, describing them as "one of the best known architectural firms in England."[278] But it was not just with his personal experience and encouragement that Robertson effectively shored up this tradition. He was also diligent in establishing ongoing institutional support that would aid the travel of current and future students. This was done primarily though ensuring that the PTC course would be appropriately recognized by both the RAIA and the RIBA as quickly as possible. Through his efforts the course was recognized by the RAIA in 1950, which meant students were eligible for membership of both the RAIA and the RIBA.[279] In 1952 RIBA directly recognized the course under the Devolution Scheme, allowing graduates exemptions from both the Intermediate and Final examinations.[280] The recognition of their degree and ease of RIBA membership meant that procuring employment in Britain for graduates was a straightforward affair.

The PTC course had the additional effect of further galvanizing the student body and the Association only grew in strength as a response. The course gave the Association a clear focal point which allowed the group to increase their networks along with an increasing stream of new

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[275] O.V. Chisholm, "Obituary," *The Architect* (March 1953): 10.
[276] Jane Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983. State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) Oral History Collection, OH1805. Conducted for the 'Architecture: Plans for Life' radio program on 6NR.
[277] Chisholm, "Obituary," 10.
[278] W.G. Hayman, Letter to the Director of Education, Perth, 12 August 1952. State Records Office of Western Australia AU WA S24-cons 16543 1945/0084.
[279] "Architects' recognition of Perth School," *The West Australian*, November 17, 1950, 9.
[280] "Presidential Address," *The Architect* (September 1952): 13.

members. [281] It also meant that the Association could focus on organizing supplementary events, lecture series and future publications, with their ambition for formal education realised. Evidence for this renewed engagement came in 1950, with the publication of the first issue of their new journal *PHI*, alongside their participation in national student conferences for the first time. [282]

3.1.4 A Chorus of Voices

Robertson was not the only voice within the profession that was encouraging students to travel abroad. Many of those Association members that had travelled during the inter-war period became closely involved with the PTC course. Mervyn Parry and Desmond Sands were both closely involved in the administration of the course and were enthusiastic in their support for students to seek further experience in the UK.[283] In 1950 Marshall Clifton started teaching design. He had worked in London for E. Vincent Harris while studying at the School of Architecture at the Royal Academy from 1929-32.[284] Clive Wade also taught for a brief period and he had previously worked in London for Wallis Gilbert.[285] The first few years of the course also coincided with a number of high profile former members of the student association working and studying in London including Kenneth Broadhurst, Margaret Feilman, and John Mercer, and as shown above, reports of their progress abroad were keenly reported in the student section of *The Architect*.[286] Feilman, Broadhurst, and Mercer would soon return to Perth and share their successes and adventures abroad with current students, further adding to the impetus and desire for young students to continue along this path.[287] This meant that by the time the first students were graduating from the diploma course in 1950 they were surrounded by people that were either vocal proponents of the trip, or had recently returned from their own trip. Amplified through the adventures from abroad relayed through the student notes section of *The Architect*, it meant that the working

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[281] It remained a popular option to be a Board student until the 1970s, where students could still take register through undertaking articles and sitting the ABWA board examinations.
[282] PHI ran for three issues from 1950-1953. Association members were regular attendees at the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) conferences.
[283] Desmond Sands joined the Professional Education Advisory Committee in 1956, and Parry had joined by 1959. Both were likely involved with the school informally as well through conducting studio critiques etc. See: Curtin University Archives, Perth Technical College Administrative Files, Item 739586, Box 68447, file 32.
[284] Chapman and Richards, M*arshall Clifton: Architect and Artist,* 22.
[285] Paul-Alan Johnson, "Compliance, Subversion and the Australia-Britain Nexus: Theoretical Dilemmas for Australian Architecture and Urbanism," *Architectural Theory Review* 4, no. 1(1999): 48.
[286] "Architectural Students' Association Students' Notes," *The Architect* (December 1949): 26.
[287] Feilman returned to Perth in September 1950, Mercer in July 1951, and Broadhurst in September 1951.

holiday had a significant visible presence amongst the student community. The decision to go seemed inevitable.

Further adding to the chorus of encouragement to travel was a series of influential travelling scholarships awarded by both the school, the RAIA and private benefactors. The travelling scholarship has long played a role in facilitating and encouraging travel abroad for Australian architecture students. In NSW there was the Architects Registration Board Travelling Scholarship, which became the Byera Hadley Scholarship in 1951. In Victoria there was the Robert and Ada Haddon Scholarship awarded through the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, which was first provided in 1934, and in South Australia there was the Kenneth and Hazel Milne Travelling Scholarship. When the President of the RAIA, Cobden Parkes, visited WA in 1950 he extolled the virtues of travel suggesting that given Perth's "remoteness" that money should be "made available to assist students to travel both in Australia and abroad."[288] This was shortly realized, and the first scholarship for students was awarded in 1953 coinciding with the unexpected death of Robertson and so was named in his honour. A second award, the Morawetz Travel Prize, was also announced in 1956.[289] These were substantial awards, with a prize of anywhere between 100-2000 pounds. They were significant not just through enabling those that received them to travel, but also for their ability to position the act of travel as central to a robust architectural education in Australia. There was only one of each scholarship available per year, which meant they were among the most prestigious and sought-after awards for graduate students, and further solidified the prospect of travel as aspirational for the student body.

Support also came from a series of institutional levers at a national level. Travel itself was in the process of being further democratized and was now accessible to a larger part of the population. There was a dramatic increase in the number of ships sailing for Europe, and the availability of more affordable shipping routes like the enormously popular 'Boomerang' excursions which were initiated in 1954 and jointly operated between the Orient Line and P&O shipping companies.[290] While the first commercial air flights had begun operating shortly after the war had ended, these were prohibitively expensive and it was not until the late 1960s that graduates started regularly

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[288] "Architects' recognition of Perth School," *The West Australian*, November 17, 1950, 9.
[289] "Report on 1953 Meeting of Council," *The Architect* (June 1953): 16. The Morawetz Travel prize was the initiative of Paul Morawetz who was then the managing director of Tip Top Paints.
[290] "Low Fares to U.K. and back," *Examiner,* May 29, 1954, 25.

flying to the UK. The working holiday was also the product of a widespread feeling of postwar optimism and prosperity, which engendered a newfound mobility, and career opportunities unavailable to previous generations.[291] In 1949 the Chifley government introduced the Australian Nationality and Citizenship Act, which saw the creation of independent Australian citizenship, while remaining British subjects.[292] There continued to be no restrictions on travel or entry into the UK by Australian citizens, having essentially the same rights as British citizens. They were free to live and pursue employment as they pleased. The language was the same and they had been trained in an essentially British architectural system so the transitioning between offices was relatively straight forward and the tasks would have been broadly familiar. Given the ongoing connection between Britain and Western Australia, it also meant that most of the graduates had strong family connections, relatives and friends scattered across the UK providing ready accommodation and support.

Underneath all of this was the students' own desire for travel. In large part, this was driven by a sense that they needed to experience the breadth of global architecture firsthand. Gus Ferguson recalled the disjunction between what they were taught from books and the need to see them in person, which he described as "putting masonry onto photographs."[293] He recalled Robertson giving a history lecture, "showing us black and white pictures of the Parthenon, and I thought, Jesus… We had to write papers about what we thought about it - to me it was just a black and white building, what could you think about it?"[294] John Duncan had a similar recollection: "…until you went to Europe, and saw some of Corb's work or what not, it still didn't really register that you had seen it. Looking in the journals doesn't give you a measure of what's going on."[295]

Perhaps more urgently though, was a feeling that they needed to experience life beyond the small city of Perth, a dream made possible through peacetime conditions and those newly affordable shipping routes. Jenny Gregory has described Perth in the 1950s as a city which retained the

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[291] Judith Brett describes this as a 'new energy'. For a more detailed view of this period see: Judith Brett, "The Menzies era, 1950-66," in *The Cambridge History of Australia, volume 2* (Cambridge; Port Melbourne, Vic.: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 112-134.
[292] This arrangement would stay in place until 1984. See: Helen Irving, "One Hundred Years of (Almost) Solitude: the Evolution of Australian citizenship," paper presented at the Department of the Senate Occasional Lecture Series, Parliament House, 22 June, 2001, https://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/senate/pubs/pops/pop37/irving.pdf
[293] Andrew Murray, "A Search for Understanding: The Architecture of R.J. Ferguson," (MPhil dissertation, University of Melbourne, 2018), 28.
[294] Andrew Murray, "A Search for Understanding: The Architecture of R.J. Ferguson," 29.
[295] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.

distinct feeling of a town.[296] For students of this period their world remained remarkably small. Most had lived their lives within a 20km radius from the city centre. Every architect's office except one was in the central city, stretched out along the main street of town, St Georges Terrace, which was also home to the Perth Technical College.[297] Several students had travelled over east during a term break, and there were those mature students who had fought in the war. But overwhelmingly, the majority of students in the 1950s that went straight from high school into their studies lived relatively compact, and geographically remote lives. Bill Weedon described his experience of the world prior to leaving as his "travel map", which comprised "an area of WA encompassed only by Northampton, Bunbury, Hyden and Rottnest."[298] Most wouldn't have even gone that far. Many still lived at home with their family, and this trip offered them a distinct kind of freedom. It saw them moving away from family, friends and the comforts of home for the first time and out of conservative Perth. Ronald Bodycoat recalled this desire for freedom and just how matter-of-fact the trip was to fellow students and his wider social circle: "…to go overseas was something that one needed to do. Right from the start… That was what you needed to do. You needed to go."[299] The Western Australian playwright Ross Lonnie articulated this simple desire in a short essay about his own time in London, where he observed: "Above all London offers the most delicious freedom. It had allowed me to develop freely and along my own lines, it is a great release to escape the crushing pressure of conformity in Perth. If there is an artist in me, it's not threatened here."[300]

3.1.5 A Note on the Numbers

> I suppose about three quarters of us eventually did so. It was mainly those who had cadetships organized with various departments that stayed home. I think just about everyone else did go… I think about 80-90 percent of them went to England.[301]

At this point, it is important to clarify that not everyone from the Association made the trip overseas. Many others took working holidays elsewhere either in Australia or abroad. But as

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[296] Gregory, *City of Light*, 40.
[297] The only architect not in the city was Claude Nicholas, who had an office in Fremantle. See: John White, "John White," 392.
[298] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.
[299] Ronald Bodycoat, interview with Andrew Murray, 19 December, 2018, Claremont, W.A.
[300] Ross Lonnie, "An Immovable Feast," *Westerly* 1(April 1972): 68.
[301] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.

evidenced in the way that John Duncan recalled the phenomenon of the trip in an interview conducted with him in 1982 quoted above, the trip at least had the perception of being a widespread, and widely experienced phenomenon. Duncan's recollection articulates the prominent position of the working holiday, which continued to hold in the popular memory of WA architects from that generation. But it also provides a point through which to interrogate the phenomenon. The true numbers that went are different to how Duncan recalled them and are difficult to accurately describe. With the arrival of the PTC course, the Association was divided into two types of students – those who attended PTC and those who became known as 'board students' who continued in the article system, taking part time classes and eventually sitting the board examinations. A number of students during this period also began the architecture course at PTC before leaving to pursue other careers in closely aligned fields, including the industrial designer Ron Facius and photographer Bill Angove, but they continued to be active members of the Association. There is no archive of the Association, and no membership lists exist. From my estimate, at least 40 members of the Association – both architects, former architecture students, and members in closely aligned fields - made the journey between 1946-1960. Only three of them were women.[302] Tracking down the board students, and those students that left part way through the course remains an almost impossible task, and so it is difficult to tell precisely how many members of the Association embarked on a working holiday to the UK. However, some useful statistics can be made with the available data. Between 1950 and 1958 - when reliable records can be found - 68 students graduated with a diploma in architecture from PTC. Of these, 26 would go on to take a working holiday in the UK, almost 40%. Of the 68, eight would go to Melbourne, and three went to the USA.[303] All of this cohort were men - It was not until 1960 when the first woman, Margot Smalpage, would graduate from the PTC Architecture course. Those that stayed in Perth typically did so for a variety of reasons. Some, as Duncan noted, had cadetships with the Public Works Department (PWD) that they continued after graduation. Others were mature-age students, usually returned servicemen, and so went straight into the workforce. Some had young families to take care of, and others had major projects or career opportunities offered to them which they pursued. Those that stayed behind were often able to build up significant practices, taking advantage of the construction boom which unfolded in Perth in the 1950s. But through a close look at the numbers, Duncan's recollection largely holds true. Outside of going directly into

[302] They were board students Jeannette Rae, and Margaret Feilman, and PTC graduate Margot Smalpage.
[303] Of the eight that went to Melbourne, three also went on to the UK.

practice, the working holiday to the UK remained the most widely experienced, singular phenomenon for graduates of this period: a shared experience which would have a profound effect on the shaping of architectural discourse in the state.

3.1.6 Getting There

> Method of Travel: This, naturally, is up to the individual. If a sea voyage is looked upon merely as a means to an end, work your way over if you can, or come in the cheapest possible cabin that is available, as long as you get here, that is the main thing, I decided to make the most of it, one doesn't take a sea voyage every year, so I came in the cheapest first-class cabin. This cabin was about £10 dearer than a comparable cabin on a one-class ship. I have never regretted the extra expense, because it was well worthwhile, and from all accounts, conditions and food were so much better than one a one-class ship.[304]

With all of these factors in place, the gears of the working holiday were well and truly grinding into action as the first seven students graduated from the diploma course in 1950. Rather than the isolated and occasional voyages of the interwar period, the growing critical mass of students and association members meant that upcoming trips and their planning became communal events. The overseas tour was a highly anticipated event and was planned and discussed among the student body in the months leading up to departure. The finer details of how to get there, what to do, and where to work was the subject of excitement and discussion for students and plans to leave were often published in *The Architect*.[305] This excitement was only heightened by the continual rotation of returning and leaving students. John Lidbury, as recorded in the quote above, published a guide to the working holiday in *The Architect* which would have been widely shared and discussed. Ian Brackenridge recalls how the idea for the tour was in a large part perpetuated through those returning students: "Gil [Nicol] had quite a bit of influence as he went away and I recall he arrived back and I was a second year architect and he came back with all these slides of the Festival in London and all those buildings and the colour and it was something quite different and I thought that was exciting."[306] A reading of the student columns from this time indicate the

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[304] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 15.
[305] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* (March 1956): 31.
[306] Geoffrey London, "Talking Architecture," in *Modern Houses: Architect-Designed Houses in Western Australia from 1950-1960*, eds. Geoffrey London and Duncan Richards (Nedlands: School of Architecture and Fine Arts, The University of Western Australia, 1997), 23.

excitement the trip generated, and most were either anticipating their own trip or living vicariously through those that were going.[307]

Some, like Alan 'Shorty' Shepherd went immediately, travelling with his wife Joan Shepherd. He was a mature student, about five years older than the other students, and was among the first graduating class of 1950. He had served in the navy during the war, and so there was a time pressure on Shepherd and other mature students to begin their careers.[308] But the more established path to London saw graduates stay on in Perth for a year or two, usually working at the practice they had done work experience during their final three year at PTC. Most students opted to delay their travel primarily to save money, as the trip remained an expensive undertaking. This allowed the students to further develop their skills and office experience, while saving enough money for the trip and to be able to afford the boat fare. Most stayed in Perth before travelling, but a few took the opportunity to travel to Melbourne to further their experience. This was the route taken by John Hallam and Stuart Coll, who were also part of the first graduating class. Hallam spent two years working for Perth firm Parry and Parry, before heading to Melbourne where he worked a year with leading Australian firm Stephenson and Turner.[309] After a year in Melbourne he returned to Perth where he immediately sailed for London. John Stuart Coll headed to Melbourne right after graduation where he worked for an architect in Toorak, before returning to Perth and sailing to the UK in 1953.[310]

3.1.7 Sailing to London

In the 1950s the only way for graduate architects to travel to the UK was by ship. At this time, the standard journey from Perth to London took 29 days by passenger ship and followed a regular route. Having come from Sydney, via Melbourne and Adelaide, ships would arrive at Victoria Quay in Fremantle Harbour where the architects would board. They would then sail to Colombo, to Aden, through the Suez Canal to Port Said, Naples, Marseille and Gibraltar before arriving at the Port of Tilbury in Essex, where a train would transport them to St Pancras Station in London. Many took this direct route, sailing straight from Fremantle to the UK, which allowed them to start work

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[307] "Student Notes," *The Architect* (March 1951): 23.
[308] John Taylor, "Alan John Shepherd," Accessed March 8, 2022, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/AJ%20Shepherd%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf
[309] John Taylor, "John Frampton Hallam," Accessed March 8, 2022, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/JF%20Hallam%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf
[310] Stuart Coll jnr., letter to Andrew Murray, 11 March 2021.

immediately. The first to take this route were Gil Nicol and Jeannette Rae. Both only went abroad for a year, so naturally the most direct route was favoured.[311] John Hallam, Alan Shepherd, Ross Chisholm, and John Lidbury soon followed, although they would all stay in the UK for much longer. Hallam travelled with his wife Lorraine Phyllis (Phyl) having been married the day before they left, and the journey was framed as a kind of extended honeymoon.[312] Others worked their way across. Ross Chisholm returned to the UK a second time in 1956, this time with Ian Brackenridge. The pair traveled aboard the MV Vignes, a merchant ship where they were able to work in exchange for their passage.[313] Although it was affordable, the journey took over three months. Aboard they were assigned duties like night watches and working on deck, but were also afforded more time ashore along the way.[314] Bill Weedon also worked his passage to London, boarding the Moreton Bay in April 1956 as a Junior Ordinary Seaman, and he crewed his way to London through the Suez Canal.[315] He recalled the practicality of the option: "I didn't have the money… it was a practical way to get to England and potentially enjoying a new job for a while."[316] On board Weedon was responsible for minor tasks to keep the ship in order, including stoning the teak decks, and repainting the ship during the voyage and in ports.[317]

[311] Nicol left in early 1951, Rae left in February 1952.
[312] John Taylor, "John Frampton Hallam."
[313] Katrina Chisholm, email communication to Andrew Murray, 18 October, 2019.
[314] Katrina Chisholm, email communication to Andrew Murray, 18 October, 2019.
[315] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.
[316] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[317] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.

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Fig 3.3 Departing Fremantle Harbour. Photographer: Edwin Whitaker. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

3.1.8 Working in Africa

By far the most popular option though was for students to delay their arrival in the UK as long as possible. This was usually done by alighting at a port along the way in order to explore Asia and Europe, travelling overland to the UK by car, scooter, bicycle or train over a period of weeks and sometimes months. Others took the opportunity to work along the way, which in the 1950s, always meant Africa. Edwin Whitaker was the first student to pursue this option, followed by Ronald Jack Ferguson, Brian Jackson, and Eugene Mapp. South Africa was always the first stop, and it provided a relatively straight forward option for those looking to find work elsewhere before moving the UK. Given its relative geographic closeness to Western Australia, regular shipping routes across the Indian Ocean, and status as a Commonwealth member state with shared British citizenship status, South Africa offered an attractive option for interested students.[318]

Whitaker was inspired to head to South Africa for work following a meeting in Perth with Broderick St Clair Lightfoot, who had travelled around Australia in late 1951.[319] Lightfoot was a typical transnational architect of the Commonwealth, He was born in Canada before migrating to South Africa as a child and later training at the University of Liverpool School of Architecture under Professor Charles Reilly.[320] He returned to South Africa and eventually formed the partnership Lightfoot, Twentyman-Jones and Kent in 1951.[321] It is not clear why Lightfoot travelled to Australia, whether it was to pursue work or visiting family, but while in Perth he met Whitaker, then a final year student at PTC, and he encouraged him to come and take a job with him in Cape Town.[322] Whitaker had graduated in 1951, one of only three students to graduate that year. He worked briefly for Powell, Cameron, and Chisholm, and registered with the Architects Registration Board in March. Lightfoot's proposal would have been an enticing prospect and the young Whitaker shortly boarded the Arawa and arrived in Cape Town in late May 1952. The boat to Cape Town took 15 days, and he was met by Kent on the docks. He worked at Lightfoot, Twentyman-Jones

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[318] South Africa was also a key node in the Indian Ocean region, which has been a historically significant network. See: Bruce Bennet and Peter Cowan, eds. "Focus on Indian Ocean Studies." Special Issue, *Westerly* 29, no. 4(1984).

[319] Shipping records show Lightfoot travelled to Albany from Cape Town, arriving on the 1st of October, 1951, before travelling around Australia and New Zealand.

[320] "Broderick St Clair Lightfoot," *Artefacts: The Built Environment of Southern Africa,* Accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=981

[321] "Broderick St Clair Lightfoot," *Artefacts.*

[322] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 29 June 1952. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

and Kent in their Adderley Street office in Cape Town, spending most of his time working on a large hotel scheme, but, after a year in the office, he decided to move on to England. He sailed to Southampton aboard the SS Arana, paying 71 pounds for a bed inside a three-berth cabin, and arrived in May 1953.[323] Whitaker carefully detailed his time in South Africa in letters written home to his parents, and they provide insight into how memorable these first moments spent abroad were. He recorded his arrival in South Africa to them: "It was a glorious day with rich warm sunshine…The view of Table Mountain in the background of Cape Town is absolutely marvellous – something I shall never forget."[324]

In January 1957, a group comprising Ronald and Clare Ferguson, Brian and Valerie Jackson and Eugene Mapp followed a similar route. Together they sailed to Cape Town aboard the HMT Moreton Bay, before driving up to Salisbury, Rhodesia, now Harare Zimbabwe. Here, Ferguson worked for Ross Mackenzie, van Heerden & Hartford doing the documentation for a large hotel,[325] while Jackson found work with F.W. Halford and then with Alfred Lloyd Spencer.[326] The group then split: the Jacksons stayed in Zimbabwe for a year before sailing to London, while the Fergusons moved on to Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika, now Tanzania, staying for a year before travelling on to the UK.[327] While in Dar es Salaam, Ferguson worked with Charles Bransgrove and Associates, designing cotton ginneries and low cost concrete block housing. Bransgrove was originally from Surrey and had trained at the Regent Street Polytechnic before moving to Tanganyika where he established a well-regarded modern practice, featured in J.M. Richards' *New Buildings in the Commonwealth* (1961). As he travelled across Africa, Ferguson extensively photographed the rich scenery and traditional architecture of Africa and sketching out memorable street scenes as he went.[328] It is unclear what happened to Mapp, but he too ended up in the UK, where he worked alongside the Fergusons at Chamberlin Powell and Bon.

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[323] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 29 May 1952. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[324] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 29 May 1952. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[325] Murray, "A Search for Understanding," 30.
[326] Directory of Architects and Buildings in Western Australia 1945-1996, Questionnaire, Brian Jackson. Private Collection, Simon Anderson.
[327] Murray, "A Search for Understanding," 31. It is not clear what happened to Mapp or how long he stayed in Africa.
[328] Ferguson kept good records of his photographs and drawings from this period and later published them as a series of books, mostly taken from this first working holiday between 1957-1960: R.J. Ferguson, *Architectural Images* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 1996); R.J. Ferguson, *Three Journeys* (West Perth: R.J.

Fig 3.4 Great Acropolis, Zimbabwe. Photographer: R.J. Ferguson, 1957.

3.1.9 Travelling Overland to the UK

Other students delayed their arrival in London by taking the opportunity to explore Asia and Europe along the way. The most typical route saw the graduates embarking at a port along the way, most often Naples, with the aim of purchasing a car, scooter or motorbike which allowed them to meander through a number of countries, almost always with a copy of Banister Fletcher as their guide. The trip could take anywhere from a few weeks and up to three months and was usually only cut short when money ran out and the necessity of work beckoned. These journeys were usually done as a group, given that it made navigating the unfamiliar terrain easier, costs were able to be shared, and added to a sense of adventure. Group travel, as three or more,

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Ferguson, 2000); R.J. Ferguson, *Iran* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 2016); R.J. Ferguson, *Istanbul* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 2016); R.J. Ferguson, *Influences* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 2016); R.J. Ferguson, *India* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 2017); R.J. Ferguson, *Africa and Japan* (West Perth: R.J. Ferguson, 2017).

became a key feature of the postwar working holiday and, as the decade progressed the frequency and the size of groups that travelled together considerably increased. Often these groups consisted of architects, their partners and other friends, demonstrating from the outset how embedded the architectural tour was within a broader cultural milieu, where the discovery of a new world was shared between a wide cross-section of young Western Australians. Perhaps the first to follow this path was Stuart Coll, who sailed from Fremantle to Genoa, before purchasing a bicycle and riding all the way to the UK.[329]

John White, Patrick (Ray) Leunig and John Duncan shortly follow Coll, and together, their lengthy journeys would provide somewhat of a road map for later travellers to follow. White, Leunig, and Duncan had graduated from PTC in 1952, working briefly in practice before embarking on their trip. All three were high profile members of the Association, and so their trip was keenly followed and reported upon in the student column and in letters of correspondence.[330] The column recorded their triumphant departure:

> Oh! to be a graduate and tour o'er Europe mounted on a Mercedes Benz. Such is the fate of three intrepid knights of the Association. After a great send-off with its accompanying streamers, toilet rolls and strings of sausages, these nomads proceeded to wreck their sixty-four square feet of berth area as methodically as they would attempt a demolition job. Bunks were found to be structurally underdesigned, a fact substantiated when a deflection of one in six was produced in the main bearers.[331]

The three left in early 1953, and sailed from Fremantle to Naples, via Colombo, Aden and Port Said before disembarking in Italy. In Naples they purchased a cheap soft top Mercedes that had been used throughout the war which would allow them to travel throughout Europe for three months. The journey which followed is a classic tale of coincidence, naïve optimism, and adventurous spirit which so characterized travel of this period. It involved fortuitously chance encounters, distant familial connections which enabled the three to traverse a network of professionals and acquaintances across the continent which was still surprisingly interconnected. While the details

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[329] Stuart Coll jnr., letter to Andrew Murray, 11 March 2021.
[330] All three had been involved with the Association for a number of years, in a variety of high-profile roles. For example, in 1952, Duncan was President and White was Vice-President of the Association. White was also editor of PHI 3, printed shortly before he sailed.
[331] "Student Notes," *The Architect* (June 1953): 19.

are specific to Duncan, White and Leunig, it is typical of the kind of adventures experienced by travelers from across Australasia.

The group headed first to Rome where a large contingent of Australians were working on an immigration scheme interviewing and recruiting prospective migrants. John White recounted a memorable encounter the trio had with Billy Snedden, future leader of the federal Liberal Party. Snedden was friends with John Duncan having both studied together at UWA in the late 1940s and were members of the Young Liberals state debating team.[332] He and his wife Joy were then living in Rome, having been recruited through the Immigration Department as a selection officer, travelling across Italy to recruit migrants to Australia across Europe.[333] Through this connection the group stayed in Rome for some time, mixing with other Australians, enjoying the food and architecture of the Italian capital. Through the Sneddens they were introduced to Milanese architect Francesco Gnecchi Ruscone, who had recently married an Australian woman, Lola Wilcocks from Brighton, Victoria.[334] From here they headed through Viterbo, Florence, Bologna, Venice, and finally Milan where Ruscone looked after them and they stayed for several weeks. In Milan they approached a number of architects including Ernesto Rogers who showed them around BBPR's latest work, before travelling once again through Austria and Switzerland where they had connections through their parents. All along the way they sought out architects' offices and as many modern buildings as they could see. They headed back down through France, through Italy and back to Rome, where they eventually sold the car. Here the group split, with John Duncan hitch-hiking his way to London, while Leunig and White travelled to London on the train. The three arrived in London only three days apart in the last week of July.[335] White recalled that the trip was only cut short by the desperate necessity to work – White had approximately 12 pounds to his name by the time he reached London, about two weeks wage.[336]

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[332] "Young Men Confident," *The Daily News,* November 27, 1950, 8. Duncan had completed an engineering degree, and Snedden a Law Degree.
[333] Billy Snedden and Bernie Schedvin, *Billy Snedden: An Unlikely Liberal* (South Melbourne: Macmillan Company of Australia, 1990), 32-33.
[334] Ruscone and Wilcocks were married in 1950. Wilcocks had travelled to Europe in June 1949 with her friend Shirley Black, see: "The Life of Melbourne: Coming of Age, Concert, Parties," *The Argus,* 30 May 1949, 7.
[335] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, August 2, 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[336] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.

Following White, Duncan and Leunig a number of other students would follow a similar path. Alexander (Lex) Hill went shortly afterwards on his own, meeting up with White along the way, along with his partner, and fellow Perth traveller, Barbara Miller in St Peter's Square in Rome.[337] Hill had travelled by cargo ship to Athens, before making his way to Italy via train and his journey was chronicled in the local newspaper, *The Daily News,* further indicating the level of interest these trips held for those back home in Perth. Columnist Kirwan Ward provided this irreverent report and sheds light on a developing travel custom:

> In some countries it's the custom to present departing travellers with baskets of flowers or richly decorated panniers of fruit. But here in the Golden West we have something quainter -a tradition, the origin of which is lost in the mists of antiquity. We give 'em a bottle of beer. Young architectural student Lex Hill sailed away from Fremantle not so long ago. With the gift bottle, last precious link with the beloved homeland, clasped to his bosom or salted away in a suitcase, or something…. He carried it with him like a talisman through Turkey, Greece, Albania, on to Italy and down the peninsular to Rome. And it was in Rome, city of the seven hills, rich with its memories of Julius Caesar, Garibaldi, Michelangelo and Audrey Hepburn, that he bumped into fellow Westralian John White. No need to tell you that the bottle's odyssey ended there on the Appian Way.[338]

Having spent a year working in Africa, Gus and Clare Ferguson flew to Athens where they purchased a Fiat 600 and made a similarly long journey, driving their way across the continent before arriving in London.[339] In 1959 another group went over. Ronald Bodycoat, Duncan Richards, Douglas Stuart and his wife Norma Stuart (nee Bunn) all travelled together, taking full advantage of the journey to the UK. In an email exchange with Richards he recalled the journey, in which the four rode scooters from the Vespa Factory to London, with fond detail:

> As for our first overseas visit, a group of four, three architectural graduates and the wife of one of the group. We travelled on the cruise ship Willem Ruys from Australia, stopping at ports along the way, such as Colombo. We disembarked well off the coast of a Greek island and a tender collected us to take us to customs. It

[337] Barbara Hill, letter to Andrew Murray, 13 January, 2020.
[338] Kirwan Ward, "Peepshow," *The Daily News* 18 September, 1954, 16.
[339] Andrew Murray, "A Search for Understanding: The Architecture of R.J. Ferguson," 31.

> was all very informal, later we walked up the beach for just a few yards before eating (mainly tomatoes in my memory) at a beach side cafe.
>
> We travelled by bus and train across Greece and took an overnight ferry to Brindisi and then by train across Italy to pick up new Vespa scooters at the Vespa factory. Two of us had a delay in delivery from a Friday to Monday. Those days we walked the Italian countryside, sleeping rough, a lovely and memorable experience. My most impressive memories were of ancient and current Italian architectural design in towns such as Milan and Turin, then Venice and most important Venezia, such buildings. Ivrea and the Olivetti Headquarters was also memorable. Our trip went on into Switzerland and then France with one or two Corbusian highlights. Then it was on to Britain and eventually we stayed at Earl's Court in London for a few weeks.[340]

In an interview conducted with Ronald Bodycoat, he recalled further details from the trip and the significance of the first hand experience it provided:

> We worshiped at the portals of Le Corbusier. So Duncan and I went to Ronchamp to experience that. You had to do those things…we saw a lot of historic stuff along the way, but as much modern stuff [as we could]… to go to Milan to see the work of Nervi, to actually go into it. We'd seen it, we had studied it, and we worshiped at their portal![341]

As Richards' and Bodycoat's careful recollection demonstrates, and something continually encountered when conducting interviews, these trips provided some of the most memorable aspects of the working holiday. They offered a moment of freedom and exploration before the realities of full time office work commenced. Retold with a remarkable clarity of detail for trips taken more than 60 years ago, it indicated just how important these journeys were for the students. This was perhaps the first occasion where the graduates were tested - not only on in their encounter of foreign culture for the first time, but also in their architectural taste as they visited work they had otherwise only seen in journals or books. This made for a memorable, and lasting experience. These journeys were recorded in diaries, in letters home to friends and family.

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[340] Duncan Richards, email communication to Andrew Murray, 25 November, 2019.
[341] Ronald Bodycoat, interview with Andrew Murray, 19 December, 2018, Claremont, W.A.

They were extensively photographed, and shown in slide shows to fellow students upon their return, later kept as precious records within family archives.

3.1.10 Conclusion

At the cessation of war in 1945, the well-trodden path to Britain was once again at the fore front of the minds of young Australians. Taking up a tradition that had been started in the interwar years by a series of pioneering students, the postwar years witnessed a continually growing number of architects heading to Britain to seek experience and adventure. As this chapter has demonstrated, the arrival of the Perth Technical College Associateship in Architecture course, and its head W.H. Robertson, ensured that the tradition of the working holiday would both continue and develop into a widespread phenomenon as the decade progressed. By the end of the 1950s, more than 40 members of the Student Association, both from Perth Technical College and Board Students had made the long journey to the UK taking an increasing variety of routes and travel options.

The working holiday had changed considerably from its interwar origins, in line with the newfound sense of freedom and optimism that the postwar period offered. With increased mobility and access to affordable travel, architects were able to follow any number of paths on their way to the UK. Sailing directly to London, taking a detour to live and work in Africa, or spending several months meandering across Asia and Europe were all possibilities for those graduates looking to undertake a working holiday in this period. While the working holiday was a more serious, business-focused affair in the interwar period, the journeys taken by the graduates of the PTC course indicated that times had changed, with a focus now firmly on seeking out new experiences and adventures. This meant that they were more than prepared when they arrived in London to begin work and experience life in the metropolitan centre.

Chapter 3.2 Working in Britain

3.2.1 Introduction

Having arrived in the United Kingdom the priority was to find work. This was primarily for the experience, but it was also a practical concern with many having run out of money on the journey over, or in paying for the fare across. This chapter examines the working experience of the architects from Western Australia who arrived in the UK in the 1950s. It examines the working environments and building typologies they encountered in the UK, the different offices in which they worked, and the institutions that became integral to the success of the working holiday. Most notable of these was the Architectural Association (AA) in Bedford Square, which offered an employment service and soon became the first port of call for all newly arrived travelers. Through the AA, many graduates found themselves sent out across the country, working on a range of small and unusual jobs in regional centres like Bath, Penzance, and South Yorkshire, before returning to London to work for leading commercial modern practices including Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall; Denis Clarke Hall; and James Cubitt and Partners. The contributions that these students made to the postwar architectural profession in the UK is examined in detail, and demonstrates how their training in Western Australia provided the architects with a different, practical based skill set which saw them gain easy and regular employment across the city.

Underlining this examination of where architects worked and what they worked upon, is a reflection on the idea of authorship and attribution, and the persistent focus on sole authors of buildings within architectural historiography which is complicated by acknowledging the contributions of these graduates. The role that these architects played as assistants working on key civic renewal projects like schools, universities and shops, presents a significant challenge to the traditional attribution of architectural projects to a sole author, and the understanding of the circulation of labour within the British Empire. Working within large teams, these graduates brought a particular skill and a practical understanding of architecture to the offices. They produced the working drawings and solved administrative and constructional problems on a series of projects that would come to define the postwar building boom of Britain. As anonymous assistants, and without easily attributable outcomes or direct design input, the ability to acknowledge their contribution to the profession remains difficult. As this chapter will demonstrate, acknowledgment of the diverse skill sets, experiences and networks which underscore the construction of Britain's postwar building movement adds a complexity and

richness to the traditional narrative and further reveals the dense, Commonwealth networks which run through these projects.

Compiling a database that listed the firms and projects that graduates worked on while in the UK was one of the major, and first tasks of the thesis project and the narrative presented here is built around the information in this database. The compilation of this material involved the consultation of a wide variety of sources and remains incomplete. Primarily the accounts presented in this chapter are reconstructed from oral histories conducted for the thesis, supplemented with mentions found in journals, archives, and chance encounters during this process. The array of work presented here is necessarily fragmented. There are many people, firms and projects that are missing, and most likely will never be recovered. Many people worked for three or four firms across a two-year period, and in many instances I could only track down 1 or 2 at best. Often all that was recorded was the practice, not the projects worked on or office duties they carried out. As assistants, their work duties and input on projects was rarely recorded. What this chapter presents is a broad overview, and an attempt to outline some key experiences and a series of generalisations which can be made about the period and the graduates' contributions – essentially a framework for understanding the graduate experience of the 1950s in the absence of complete data.

3.2.2 Encountering the Architectural Profession in the UK

The architectural profession in Britain that the architects entered in the early 1950s was radically different to what they had left in Perth. Everything from the range of building types, the historic contexts they had to negotiate, the sheer scale of the projects, and dramatically larger budgets would have been unfamiliar. The Perth that they had left in the early 1950s was a fledgling city of just over 300,000 thousand people.[342] Historian Jenny Gregory describes it: "This then was the City of Perth in the mid-fifties: still a little city by world standards, not particularly modern or sophisticated despite a few skyscrapers, traffic lights, parking meters and the occasional artistic controversy, bearing substantial traces of its past, thought of as a town, and substantially British in population and outlook."[343] The main city street, St Georges Terrace, was a mile long and filled with 2-3 storey buildings that had seen little change since the First World War. Construction techniques were traditional and building material restrictions from the war were still in place.

[342] Gregory, *City of Light*, 38. Gregory notes that in 1954, the city had 'not quite 349,000 people'.
[343] Gregory, *City of Light*, 69.

Their effect would still be keenly felt well into the decade as supply struggled to recover. Duncan Richards characterized the building industry of the early postwar years as being defined by "constructional limitations and difficulties caused by administrative controls, scarcity of building materials and a lack of skilled tradesmen."[344] While modernism had started to make an impact on the city's built environment, the profession remained small and conservative.

Despite these restrictions, it was not in the modern expression or construction techniques of British architecture that would shock the arriving architects most. Rather it was the scale, the typology and the contexts with which they worked, and the office culture in which they were immersed. By the time the graduates had left Perth they were equipped with a good working knowledge of modern architecture. They kept abreast with contemporary discourse through journals and books and were fed first-hand reports from returning travelers. PTC taught them what were essentially British construction practices, which meant that students were well versed in drawing conventions and office protocols that were shared between the two countries. But the scale and type of projects they would encounter was very different. In Perth, most firms that the graduates had worked with were older commercial firms that dealt mostly with small to mid-size commercial jobs like offices and banks, rarely more than three storeys, and were still working under the cloud of material rations. As a comparatively young city, in terms of European occupation, there was also little interest in history or context, and no need to negotiate with older building stock in the city. Almost all new builds began with a blank site. This meant that one of the biggest initial differences to be encountered in Britain was dealing with the diverse array of older building stock, carefully mediating between existing buildings and an array of overlays and controls that dealt with historic fabric, a process almost completely foreign in Perth practice at the time. This saw architects working on unfamiliar assignments like designing additions to, renovating or conserving existing fabric, as well as negotiating the strict boundaries of inner-city London blocks.

[344] Richards, "The Acceptance of Modern Architecture in WA," 12.

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Fig 3.5 St Georges Terrace, the main street of Perth, 1955. State Library of Western Australia, Illustrations Ltd collection. 103127PD.

3.2.3 Perth Training

Although the arriving graduates found themselves working on a variety of unfamiliar projects, they were well equipped to enter directly into British practice. In many cases, it appears that their Perth education provided them with an initial edge in Britain given their extensive practical experience. Architects from Western Australia arrived in Britain with at least three years office experience, having completed them as part of the requirements for the PTC course, which was then two years of course work and three years of 4 day a week office training. With most having stayed behind another year to save some extra money, many architects arrived in the UK with 4 or 5 years of practical experience. This meant they were well versed in the practical realities of the contemporary architecture office and found themselves easily adapting to their new

environments. Francis Senior Bolland, who replaced Robertson as head of PTC in 1954 noted the unusual and outsized practical proportion of the course upon his arrival:

> The emphasis placed on practical experience in the present course at Perth is, however, greater than in the majority of the other schools mentioned above [in the UK and Australia]; most British schools require a period of only six months during the course.[345]

Bolland soon reversed the course structure, so that in 1957 the course became three years of full-time study and two years practical training. But the emphasis on office experience remained a hallmark of architectural education in WA into the 1960s and it remained out of step with the trend towards a full academic education implemented around the world. In recalling the training he received as a student at PTC in this period, Duncan Richards described it as "far too practical in nature, trade based training rather than education."[346] While this would disadvantage the students in terms of a theoretical grounding, it meant that students graduating from PTC had significant practical advantages over those who had gone through the university system. The first PTC graduate to travel overseas, Gilbert Nicol, remarked upon his return from London in 1952, "I had no reason to feel at all inferior, but to the contrary, very well satisfied with my Perth training."[347] After a year in London, John Lidbury wrote a further report on his experience in London which was published in *The Architect* and he also drew attention to the benefit of his decidedly practical training:

> The training I received at the School of Architecture, Perth, has at all times stood me in good stead. The work was a little strange at first; local practice, the use of a greater range of methods and materials; office administration; methods of construction, etc., all had to be mastered (the process always goes on) but I found that after a week or even less I could take my place beside any assistant of comparable experience and hold my own with them. Generally speaking, I have found that in English schools the bias is on Design and less on Technical

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[345] F.S. Bolland, "Proposals for reform of the Associateship course in Architecture," 27 July 1954. Curtin University Archives, Perth Technical College Administrative Files, Item 739586, Box 68447, file 32.
[346] Duncan Richards, "With a Little Help from My Friends: Francis Senior Bolland," unpublished essay, February 2009. Richards attended PTC from 1953-1957.
[347] Technical Education Branch internal memo, 12 August 1952. State Records Office of Western Australia AU WA S24-cons 16543 1945/0084.

> knowledge, with the result that an assistant trained in this country takes longer to adjust himself to the practice in an office that does a student from Perth. He takes longer to become an efficient assistant.[348]

John White recalled a similar situation as he worked his way through a number of offices:

> We were very practical. We were trained as architects to do things. We weren't just straight out of school. We had all worked, I had designed and had houses built before I graduated. Working in other offices with graduates from the AA they didn't know all sorts of things which we had to sort out for them.[349]

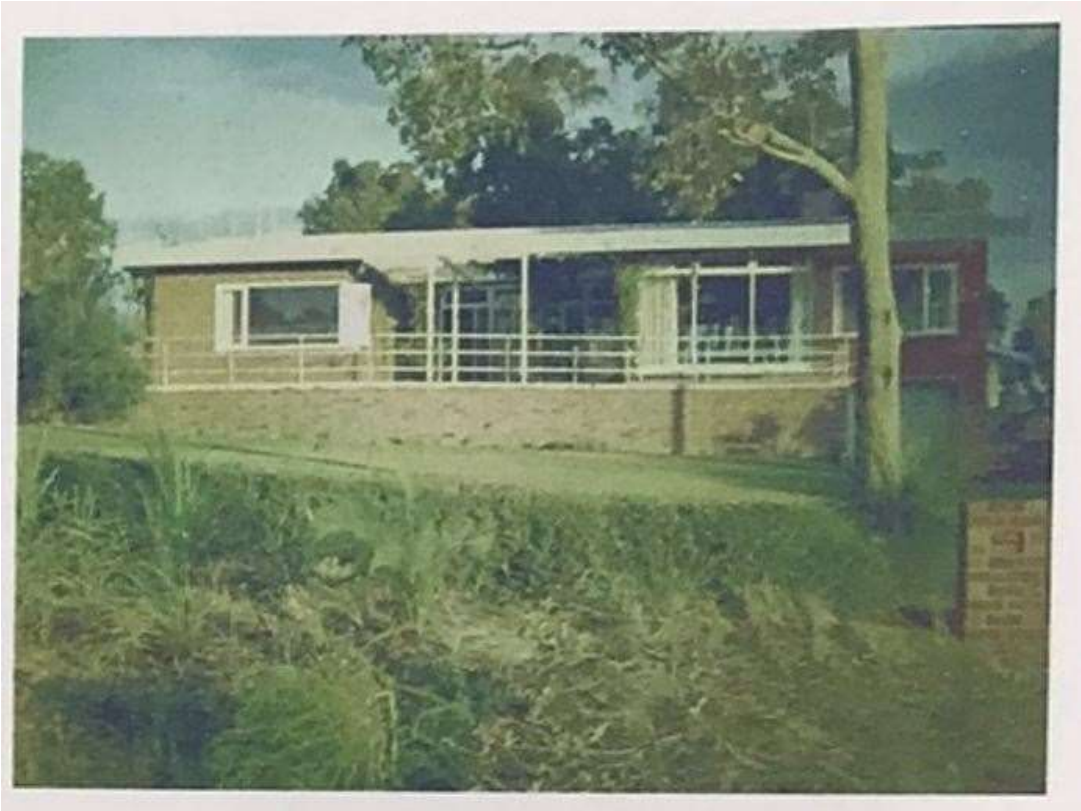

Fig 3.6 J.W. Davis House, Bicton, W.A. Marshall Clifton and Eric Leach architects. 1951. John White was the lead architect while still a student. John White Private Collection.

[348] J.D. Lidbury, "W.H.Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," *The Architect* (December 1955): 31.
[349] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A. Geraint Franklin has also described this tension also played out within London itself, between those trained at the AA, and those at the competing Regent Street Polytechnic along the lines of a class distinction: "it was said that the AA turned out principles; the Poly, assistants". Geraint Franklin, *John Outram* (Swindon: Liverpool University Press, 2022), 2-3.

The graduates were also bolstered by the intensive training they had received in structural mechanics under German engineer Erich Shilbury. Following his instruction, students were able to make advanced calculations relating to the sizing and movement of structures, which White again recalled gave him an edge in the offices, "when I went to England [I] was often asked to work out concrete sizes which English graduates were not able to do".[350]

This practical knowledge instilled a confidence that was shared amongst the student group, and was a theme that became evident across a number of the interviews conducted. It meant that not only were they readily able to find work but also they were able to quickly advance through the offices and found themselves in the position to choose their employers and negotiate on terms. As the decade progressed, and the number of graduates arriving steadily increased, it appeared that Australian graduates developed a name for their hard-working ethic and practical knowledge. This can be seen in the numerous employment 'chains' that are evident across the decade, whereby a number of Western Australian architects were essentially exchanged for each other on a rotating basis. As one person left, another was able to take their place. This can be seen in an office like Erno Goldfinger which took on at least 4 graduates from PTC between 1954 and 1965, and the four names which appeared on the 1959 Barbican report highlighted at the introduction of this thesis.[351]

3.2.4 Finding Work

Finding work in the UK proved to be a relatively straight forward affair for the students that arrived in London in the early 1950s. As Bill Weedon described, "There was always a place for an Australian trained architect in London at that time."[352] Britain in the 1950s, was, as MacMillan so famously declared, a time that "most of our people have never had it so good."[353] This was a time defined by the institution of the "classic welfare state," and the release of the landmark Beveridge Report, with its sweeping reforms that would drive a postwar construction boom.[354] Alongside the widespread building projects which followed the implementation of the Beveridge Report, the

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[350] John White, "John White," 393.
[351] Other offices which had significant chains between 1950 and 1965 include Architects Co-Partnership, Howard Lobb, and TP Bennett. CPB employed at least 7 PTC graduates in this time.
[352] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[353] Peter Hennessy, *Having it so Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 1.
[354] Hennessy, *Having it so Good,* 22-23. The key aspects of the Beveridge report, increased education, healthcare, and housing, all required a swathe of new buildings to accommodate these aims like schools, hospitals, clinics, and housing.

construction boom was driven by a series of political initiatives including the 1954 Conservative Party repeal of aspects of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. This effectively freed up the property market and led to what Ewan Harrison has described as "a bull-market", which "unleashed" an office development boom across Britain.[355] This meant there was a steady supply of work for arriving graduates, and they were quickly funneled into the drawing rooms of architectural offices, put to work documenting the results of this booming market across both the public and private sectors.

For those architects who arrived in London in the late 1940s and early 50s, finding employment was done in much the same as it had been in the interwar period. This involved either relying on established connections, like letters of recommendation from their employers, or traditional employment avenues like classifieds in the paper and trade journals. Most found jobs once they had arrived, but in rare instances, they wrote in advance to respected firms in the hope of securing work with well-known practices that aligned with their interests.[356] As the numbers of architects arriving in the UK began to increase there was a clear shift in how jobs were procured. The significance of personal networks and existing contacts within offices became increasingly important for how jobs were procured, as those employment chains were developed and positions were passed on to a continually revolving group of arriving travelers. But before these networks could develop, by far the most important mechanism for finding work for Western Australian architects during the 1950s and well into the 1960s, was the Architectural Association (AA).

3.2.5 The Architectural Association

The AA played an integral role in facilitating a relationship between Western Australian architects and the postwar London architectural scene and quickly became entrenched as the first port of call for all arriving architects. The AA maintained an employment register which was available to its members and it was quickly seized upon. Membership of the AA also provided access to working spaces, alongside use of the lantern slide library, the bar and dining room, and invitations to special events like lectures and building tours. Although the AA offered free memberships for

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[355] Ewan Harrison, "Making the Railways Pay: The Redevelopment of Euston Station, Labour and Conservative Visions of Public Sector Property Speculation in the 1960s and 1970s," *Twentieth Century British History* (5 April, 2022): 6. https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwac008*;* and Peter Weiler, "Labour and the Land: From Municipalization to the Land Commission, 1951-1971," *Twentieth Century British History,* 19, no. 3 (2008): 322.

[356] Geoffrey E. Summerhayes, *The Influence of Architects: Summerhayes Three Generations,* (Unpublished manuscript, 2010), 76. Private Collection, Simon Anderson.

three months, most students from WA elected to become paid members for the duration of their stay, using the employment register multiple times to find different, and usually better paid, work. The 1950 AA yearbook outlines the membership details and notes the employment register as one of the main offerings that a membership provided. It was made accessible to any members during the week and continually updated. It notes: "A list is kept of all inquiries made by architects for assistance, temporary or otherwise, also a list of assistants who may seek engagement; and immediate steps are taken in each fresh application to put the parties into communication one with the other."[357] It is not clear when the AA started to offer this service to members, but by the 1950s it proved to be a successful venture. Given that the AA maintained the register, it meant that most practices that advertised were closely affiliated with the AA in some way. In turn, this meant that architects from Perth often ended up working for firms with close AA connections, and further reinforcing the relationship. John Lidbury in his guide to working in London, made special mention of the register:

> When I wanted a job, the first thing I did was to join the Architectural Association, Bedford Square, London… Jobs at the moment are extremely easy to obtain. The A.A has a list of firms needing assistants immediately, a thing unheard of two years ago, and this list is readily made available to those members who are seeking employment.[358]

The AA were aware of this special relationship and made efforts to maintain it. The secretary H.J.W. Alexander wrote a letter to *The Architect* in the hope of attracting future members, ensuring that prospective travellers knew about the advantages of joining the association. He wrote: "Any Architect or Architectural Student, from overseas may be elected a temporary honorary member for a period not exceeding three months without the payment of an entrance fee or subscription. The AA has always maintained a very close relationship with Architects from other countries and is anxious to further these links."[359]

The first to make use of this services, from what can be discerned, was Edwin Whitaker, and his use of the register reveals much about the service and the close relationship the students

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[357] *The AA Year Book, 1950* (London: The Architectural Association, 1950), 23. Architectural Association Archives.
[358] Lidbury, "W.H.Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.
[359] "Letters," *The Architect* (September 1957): 39.

developed with Alexander. The AA was well known to Perth architects and so it accords that they would head directly to Bedford Square.[360] Whitaker arrived in London in May 1953, and shortly after joined the AA in order to find work. In a letter home to his parents, he wrote: "Yesterday I went in to see Alexander, the Secretary of the Architectural Association in London and he suggested that I should give this job a try so we phoned through straight away."[361] Whitaker was placed in touch with an architect in Bath named McMillan, who agreed to pay him 9 pounds a week plus keep and a return train ticket to London. McMillan ran a small practice from a farm just outside of Bath working primarily on farmhouse conversions and Whitaker was put to work converting an old mill into a modern dwelling. He stayed for six weeks before he moved onto a more exciting city job, this time with Denis Clarke Hall. Whitaker's letters home again provides insight into the relationship that Alexander maintained with the members, keeping in regular contact, and seeking out opportunities where they arose. Whitaker wrote "On Saturday morning I went into see about a job for when I return to London… Mr Alexander of the Architectural Assn. put them onto me…This firm is one of the best in London on schools and I think England has the best new schools in the world. I explained this to Alexander when I last saw him, so he kept his eyes open for me."[362]

Others like John White and Ray Leunig came to the AA through different channels. On the train from Italy to London, White recalled a chance meeting with Robert Furneaux Jordan, the former President of the AA, who also encouraged them to sign up and become members and they were assigned a number of small jobs which led to stable employment.[363] John Duncan recounted the AA in a letter home to friends, where he recalled putting his name down, alongside Whitaker, on the "wanted list" which resulted in Duncan being offered a job in Penzance, Cornwall with Bazeley and Barbary.[364] Word of the AA job register spread, initially through word of mouth and later through published accounts like John Lidbury's travel report. By the mid-1950s, its reputation as the first port of call for graduates arriving in London was cemented. Almost all graduates I spoke to, including those that went in the mid 1960s, recalled going straight to the AA where they were

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[360] As an example of this awareness, the PTC library received issues of the AA journal PLAN in the early 1950s. See: "Student Notes," *The Architect* (March 1951): 22.
[361] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 20 May 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[362] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 22 June 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[363] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[364] John Duncan, letter to Arnold Potts, 14 January, 1954. Private Collection, Julie Potts.

allocated jobs across the UK. Ross Chisolm and John Lidbury were the next pair of students to travel after Whitaker, White, Duncan and Leunig. They went to the AA two weeks after arriving and started work the next week, where they were placed together in Sir Thomas Bennett's office.[365] John Hallam had started with Bennett just a few weeks prior, where he was working on the Anglo American Corp building and it is almost certain that he would have used the AA register as well.[366] As first port of call for those arriving in London, the AA figured as an important part of the lived geography for Western Australian architects during their working holiday.[367] It was both a job centre and a social hub, aspects of which will be examined in the next chapter.

3.2.6 Working around Britain

Many students found themselves in the first instance working small jobs in towns across Britain, mostly acquired through the AA registry. These small jobs allowed for the most immediate exposure to the breadth of the English architectural profession at the time and provided architectural experience unimaginable in Perth. They were not always the most exciting positions, but they exposed the Perth architects to the multitudes of practice in Britain at the time, working on everything from competitions, heritage buildings and large industrial projects. Ed Whitaker was first sent to Bath, where he worked on a conversion project, transforming a circa 1750 mill into a modern house. Whitaker remarked to his parents: "There is nothing to the job really."[368]John White and Ray Leunig were sent to South Yorkshire, where they spent five weeks making a measured drawing of Sandbeck Park, a James Paine designed country house for the Earl of Scarborough.[369] Following this, the pair went on to work with the Middlesex County Council for a few months where they spent their time mostly making architectural models for the new county school program. Ronald Bodycoat found employment with Booth Ledeboer and Pinckheard who were then undertaking a lot of work in the adaptation of historic buildings. There, Bodycoat found himself documenting, recording and making archival records of buildings including Wardour Castle

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[365] Ross Chisholm, personal diary, 1954. Private Collection Katrina Chisholm; and "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[366] John Taylor, "John Frampton Hallam."
[367] Strangely I discovered no instances of interactions with AA students and the WA graduates.
[368] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 20 May 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[369] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A; "Architectural Students' Association" *The Architect* (September 1953): 18. This was presumably in preparation for works carried out later that year by Claud Phillimore, it is unsure if White and Leunig worked for him, or for a local agency.

by James Paine in Wiltshire, and barrack buildings by the Adam brothers in Winchester.[370] In 1956 Bill Weedon went to work briefly for Minoprio, Spencely and P.W. MacFarlane, best known for their large-scale city planning schemes, where he was assigned to work on plans for Kuwait City, which the office had previously master planned in 1951. He described the job to me: "I had a very humble job of doing major paving layouts for the centre of that city... I worked there until that job was done, because it was only engaged for a short time."[371] After that Weedon went to Fisk and Fisk where he worked on a scheme for the new Battersea Post Office building, a classically inflected, brick and concrete framed building, enlivened with jaunty green spandrel panels in the glazing. Again, his description of the work he relayed to me is telling: "That was once again, a pretty humble architectural job. One of the jobs was to literally just produce a working drawing sheet of a very rapidly drawn sketch done by I think the senior Fisk, and that's the only thing I did at that office, one sheet of drawing I remember."[372] Stuart Coll went the other way, working for a period in London before moving up to Glasgow where he spent time working for Wylie Shanks and Wylie before returning to Perth.[373]

For most graduates there was little in these jobs in terms of applicable skills to learn. Weedon remembered one of the simpler but direct experiences in these jobs: "I always remember [at Minoprio] it was the first metric job that I had ever done. So I had to leave behind the imperial system."[374]These jobs would prove to be fairly straight forward affairs for which their education at PTC had set them up well, and did not test them intellectually. But they offered crucial exposure to a variety of different architectural practices, and firsthand experience of British office culture.

These jobs provided a steppingstone into the world of English architectural practice, establishing contacts and financial stability through which to pursue later positions with more responsibility. For many, they would end up moving around to a number of different jobs, staying only a few months before moving on for a number of reasons, either because they were temporary positions to begin with, the work was not satisfying, or most often, in the pursuit of better pay. Many would end up working for three or four practices in the space of two years. Some prioritized travel, and

[370] Ronald Bodycoat, interview with Andrew Murray, 19 December, 2018, Claremont, W.A.
[371] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[372] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[373] Stuart Coll jnr., letter to Andrew Murray, 11 March 2021.
[374] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.

so worked short stints, before taking leave and heading off on extended holidays. They would then return to the AA where they knew work was easily obtained again and this cycle would continue.

3.2.7 Working for Middling Modern

Following a period of shuttling between odd jobs, most students would find themselves stationed at medium to large commercial practices in central London where they could usually earn a decent wage, staying on for a year or so. The majority found themselves in the offices of architects practicing what might broadly be described by what Mark Crinson has called "Middling Modernism".[375] These were practices which sat between the pioneering high modernism of the 1930s and a latter mainstream modernism that flourished in the 1960s. Crinson describes these practices as part of an "expanding area of modernist practice between the cutting edge dissidents and the defenders of a now old faith, yet often in contact with both."[376] Alan Powers has similarly described them as "the age group that acted as a bridge between the ideals of the 1930s at their most ideologically insistent and the realization of those ideals in the climate of social democracy after 1945."[377] Many had taken part in the 1951 Festival of Britain, and would go on to design key infrastructure projects across the country. These were firms that produced a vast quantity of good quality, robust British modernism and played a major role in the postwar rebuilding of the country. Often overshadowed by the emerging 'young turks' like the Smithsons, Stirling and Gowan, Howell Killick Partridge and Amis, and the renewed LCC Architects Department, these firms produced a body of work which was largely undervalued in the following decades.[378]

One of the more high-profile examples of these firms was Chamberlin, Powell & Bon (CPB), which saw at least six Western Australians pass through their doors in the 1950s. Elain Harwood characterizes the firm's position within the profession as one which clearly straddled these two generations of practice:

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[375] Mark Crinson, *Stirling and Gowan: Architecture from Austerity to Affluence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012):71-72.
[376] Crinson, *Stirling and Gowan,* 71-72.
[377] Alan Powers, "Architects Co-Partnership: Private Practice for Public Service," in *British Design: Tradition and Modernity after 1945*, ed. Christopher Breward, Fiona Fisher and Ghislaine Wood (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 113.
[378] Many of these firms have been the subject of increased scholarly and public attention, most visibly through the advocacy work of the Twentieth Century Society and books they have produced including: Elain Harwood, *Mid-Century Britain: Modern Architecture 1938-1963* (Batsford: Batsford, 2021); and their *C20 Architects* series.

> Chamberlin, Powell and Bon were not members of the Independent group, nor did they attend the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne generally associated with the movement. They belonged to that slightly older generation trained during the war whose other members – notably Philip Powell and Hidalgo Moya – developed a highly refined, sophisticated Modernism within the functional tradition that was so admired by British critics… CP&B later pushed modern architecture to the monumental in a manner achieved by few other practices. [379]

As Harwood notes, many of these firms including CPB; Yorke Rosenberg Mardall; and Architects Co-Partnership came from this slightly older generation, but, through the careful fostering of young talent within their offices, were able to refresh their practice and become the progressive, leading offices of the 1960s.

These middling modern practices were part of a group effort responsible for constructing much of the new public face of postwar Britain. In a moderate, but crisp modern language, these firms worked predominantly in the public realm, producing school and university buildings, industrial factories, and an enormous array of civic structures from banks to post offices and railway stations. Together with a few high-profile private commissions like the large scale curtain wall office buildings and shopping centres dotted across British towns, these firms produced the projects which would come to define a renewed 'classic welfare state' Great Britain as it was recast in the postwar years.[380] They were able to take advantage of the swathe of new government led initiatives which emerged in the wake of the Beveridge Report like the Hertfordshire Schools Program, and the massive program of university building expansion which followed the release of the 1946 Barlow report.[381] These provided firms with the kind of work and expansion opportunities that only a few years earlier would have seemed impossible. An editorial in *The Architectural Review* covering the new university expansion era noted this drastic change: "Even in the nineteenth century there was no period when architectural practice could be said to be largely taken up with universities…[But] the situation has begun to change in a spectacular

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[379] Elain Harwood, *Chamberlin, Powell and Bon: The Barbican and Beyond: Twentieth Century Architects* (London: RIBA, 2011), 4.
[380] Hennessy, *Having it so Good,* 22.
[381] See: Louise Campbell, "Building on the Backs: Basil Spence, Queens' College Cambridge and University Architecture at Mid-Century," *Architectural History* 54(2011): 383-405.

manner. A leading office without a university or at least a university building on its drawing boards now seems an oddity."[382]

It was within these expanding practices that the members of the Association largely found themselves. They brought their practical knowledge and work ethic to the engine rooms of the postwar rebuilding of Britain and they produced working drawings and technical solutions for the schools, universities and civic buildings of this new era. During the 1950s, members of the Association worked for firms including Denis Clarke Hall, Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall; T.P. Bennett; Howard V Lobb; Slater Uren and Pike; James Cubitt; Booth, Ledeboer and Pinckheard; Ronald Ward and Partners; Denys Lasdun; Erno Goldfinger; Architects Co-Partnership; and Chamberlin Powell and Bon. They worked on defining postwar projects like the Barbican, the Golden Lane Estate, Vickers House, the Festival of London buildings, the John Lewis Oxford Street store, and Basildon New Town, along with key secondary schools scattered throughout the counties.

3.2.8 Typical Experiences

What follows is a selection of practices and projects that the graduates worked on during their time in Britain, in an effort to describe the variety and extent of the postwar architectural profession that they encountered. Drawn primarily from oral histories undertaken for this project, the examples provide an insight into the graduates' diverse experiences, and exposure to the profession.

(Richard) Morris Fairbrother and his wife Margaret travelled directly to London in 1956 on a 'restricted entry' return ticket arranged through P&O cruises, which allowed them to spend a year in London.[383] Through the AA, Fairbrother found work with Slater and Uren, where he would stay for the duration of his trip. He worked on a variety of jobs, but the ones that occupied his time most was the new flagship John Lewis store on Oxford Street, and Sanderson House in Berners Street, London, designed for Arthur Sanderson & Sons, the royally appointed wallpaper manufacturers. An enormous building which stretched out along Oxford Street, the John Lewis store was completed in six stages given the expansive aspirations of the store and the huge demand for shopping as postwar restrictions were eased.[384] A six storey steel framed building in a

[382] "The Universities Build," *The Architectural Review* 134, no. 800 (Oct 1, 1963), 230.
[383] Morris and Margaret Fairbrother, telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 15 October 2019.
[384] "Steel," *Architectural Review* 124, no. 741 (Oct 1, 1958): xxvii.

classical modern mode which replaced the previous John Lewis store on the site that was damaged in the Blitz, the building has become a landmark on Oxford Street and a symbol of London's postwar prosperity. Completed in 1960, Sanderson House is a nine storey reinforced concrete frame building, with a curtain wall cladding with prominent aluminium vertical mullions which carry the ventilation and service pipes.[385] A smartly dressed corporate headquarters with a magnificent central landscaped courtyard, the building drew on recent American buildings like Lever House, and explored the principle of an "art building"[386] where the architect, interior designer, landscape architect and artists worked closely to achieve a kind of corporate Gesamtkunstwerk.

Following a series of small jobs across the country, John White found work in Cecil Handisyde and Taylor's office, as part of the team working on the design of a High Voltage Insulator Test Laboratory for Pilkington Brothers Glass manufacturers in St Helen's Lancashire.[387] This was an enormous new laboratory within the expanded campus of the Pilkington Brothers headquarters and was designed to specifically test advances in high voltage insulators which were to be supplied to the British state electrical industry.[388] The building was reported in both the *Architectural Review* and *Architects' Journal*, but architecturally it was unremarkable aside from its sheer size and the use of prefabricated steel stanchions over 70 feet long.[389]

Edwin Whitaker worked with Denis Clarke Hall for six months from July until December 1953. This was a time when the office was designing a large number of secondary schools across multiple counties given Clarke Hall's close involvement the education ministry, and a reputation which came from his pioneering modern design for the Richmond Girls High School (1938).[390] Clarke Hall had also been the judge of the high profile competition for the Hunstanton School, won by Alison and Peter Smithson, and the building was under construction while Whitaker was in the office. During his time in the office, Whitaker worked on a number of school schemes including the

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[385] "Office Buildings," *Architectural Review* 125, no. 744 (Jan 1, 1959): 29.
[386] Historic England listing for *Sanderson Hotel (Formerly Sanderson House),* Accessed 19 May 2022, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1248457
[387] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[388] "Electrical research – who should pay?" *The New Scientist* (November 22, 1956): 7.
[389] "Buildings in the News," *The Architects' Journal* 125, no. 3241 (April 11, 1957): 534.
[390] Clarke Hall had also served on the 1943 Woods Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Education. See: Robert Townsend, "Towards an Architecture: Post-War Schools in Britain," *The Architectural Review* 106, no. 633(1949): 153-16; "Schools at Richmond, Yorkshire: Denis Clarke Hall," *The Architectural Review* 88, no. 524 (1940): 15-26.

Basildon Fryerns County Secondary Technical School, where he was part of a small team of three and where he was involved from the initial workings to preparing the working drawings before they were sent off to the quantity surveyors.[391] Whitaker was able to get John Duncan a job in the office during the summer break, and he also stayed for six months. Duncan worked primarily on the High Wycombe Girls School, where he spent three months doing window schedules.[392] Duncan recalled it as a rather uninteresting work, describing it as, "another 6 months getting used to English practice and building materials."[393]

Duncan then moved to Penzance to take up an opportunity in the office of Bazeley and Barbary, headed by notable first wave modernist George Bazeley. There, Duncan spent six months working specifically on a competition entry for a new secondary school for 600 students in Falmouth, Cornwall.[394] The firm was typically known for its residential and military work and had limited experience in design for education, and so Duncan was hired partly on the back of his experience designing schools with Clarke Hall.[395] Bazeley and Barbary were invited to put forward a scheme, and they submitted a fairly austere modernist block. With extensive face brickwork and industrial glazing set within a regulating frame, it was an extension of the interwar Modern Movement buildings produced by Bazeley and his former employer Serge Chermayeff, and the scheme was described in the AJ by Astragal as 'fairly orthodox'[396]. The competition eventually won by Lyons, Israel and Ellis with a much more hard-edged scheme.[397]

This brief survey of the kinds of buildings and environments that the Association members found themselves working on in the first half of the 1950s provides an introduction into the diverse array of work in which they were involved. They worked for architects, many of whom were part of the pioneering wave of British modernism in the interwar years, and were exposed to the large scale of British architectural practice of the postwar period, immersed in a public facing modernism at a scale and diversity unseen in Western Australia. The work was not always exciting or challenging,

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[391] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 19 October 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[392] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[393] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[394] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[395] John Duncan, letter to Arnold Potts, 14 January, 1954. Private Collection, Julie Potts.
[396] "Astragal notes and topics," *The Architects' Journal* 119, no. 3082 (Mar 25, 1954): 357.
[397] "Cornish Vernacular," *The Architects' Journal* 119, no. 3082 (Mar 25, 1954): 358.

and many sought out more progressive experiences than these middle moderns could offer. But it provided valuable experience and exposure to the British profession.

Fig 3.7 Battersea Post Office, London. Fisk and Fisk, 1956. Bill Weedon, assistant. Photographer: Danny Robinson, https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/607943

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Fig 3.8 John Lewis flagship store, Oxford Street London. Slater and Uren, 1960. Slater and Uren, Morris Fairbrother, assistant. Photographer: John McCann, RIBA Collections.

"This image/material has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons"

Fig 3.9 High Wycombe Girls School, High Wycombe. Denis Clarke Hall 1958. John Duncan, assistant. Design Council Slide Collection, VADS.ac.uk.

3.2.9 Understanding Experience

The projects and the practices for whom the students worked tells only part of the story however, and a list of projects, often lines gleaned from CVs provided to me or briefly mentioned in oral histories, reveals little of their actual experience and contributions within the office. Architects from Perth worked as assistants at various levels of seniority, which makes it difficult to discuss their work using traditional frameworks. They found themselves in the middle of the postwar rebuilding of Britain, working behind the scenes, and largely uncredited. As a result, there is little evidence which remains of students' roles within these offices. Many of these offices have extremely fragmented archives, and the work of assistants is difficult to identify with little more than their initials found dotted across an archive to indicate their involvement. As assistants, often working within large teams, there is not a distinct output with which to link their work or particular aspects of a design that can be identified. The sense of authorship, singular or group led,

which architectural scholarship has traditionally relied upon, makes articulating the contribution of these assistants difficult.[398]

The members of the Association that went to London in the 1950s had a wide range of experiences within their respective offices. Through a review of the oral histories conducted for this thesis, in combination with supporting sources, an overarching framework of their office roles can be established. The students worked mainly as architectural assistants within a design team, where they produced working drawings, made models, and measured drawings, and usually were working closely with a senior partner of the firm. They had input to the design process, made site visits, and took care of the administration of building works while negotiating between clients, builders and councils. They were also problem solvers, and liaised with contractors, clients, councils and manufacturers in all stages of the building process. They were essential to the production of architecture, but in a way that has been rarely considered historically. This section outlines a range of experiences had by graduates within the offices, as a way to illustrate the kinds of responsibilities and experiences that the graduates would have encountered. These accounts privilege those with available and well documented sources, but are intended to provide an insight into the lived experience of the assistant, and to act as a personal foil to the list of projects and offices above. Drawn from oral history, personal archives, and an institutional archive, these accounts suggest how one might understand the role of the assistants within the office environment and acknowledge them within architectural historiography.

3.2.10 John Duncan at Erno Goldfinger

Perhaps the most thorough account of the role that the Perth architects played within these offices as architectural assistants is observed through John Duncan's time working for Erno Goldfinger. Although Duncan passed away long before this thesis commenced, I was able to speak with his wife Beth Duncan, who was in London at the same time, and there is an oral history conducted with him by Jane Fleming for the 'Architecture: Plans for Life' radio program on 6NR in 1982 which is held in the SLWA. The Goldfinger office has an extensive and well documented archive which is held within the RIBA collection, and it was primarily through these records that Duncan's time at the firm can be well documented. Goldfinger and his office have been otherwise

[398] For further information about assistants and the idea of authorship see: Colin Davies, *The Prefabricated Home* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 88-106.

well examined, through a series of books, biographies and a lengthy interview series with former employees which is part of the British Libraries 'Architects' Lives' series.

After working in Penzance on the school competition and keen to move back to London, Duncan looked for work through the AA again. He described his return to London in his interview with Fleming:

> There was never any shortages of jobs in those days, it was just a matter of where and when you would work, not whether you would get a job. So I went to the AA where they had a job bureau and they sent me off to TP Bennetts, which was known as being the biggest organization in town that did nothing interesting at all. But it was a job so I went there for three weeks. And then they [The AA] rang up and said there is another going that you may be interested in with Erno Goldfinger.[399]

Duncan described his time with Goldfinger as the "highpoint" of his whole trip.[400] He began work in August 1954, and he would stay on for almost 18 months, which he recalled as being "a record for Erno's office!!"[401] Goldfinger's office was small at this stage, with between four and six assistants alongside Erno and his secretary Rosemary Gough. Presumably, given his extensive practical experience both in Perth and in Penzance, Duncan was quickly promoted to Chief Assistant within the office and worked across a number of jobs, and became closely involved with three key projects from this time: the Carr and Co offices in Birmingham (1954), the Regent's Park Road flats (1954), and an office building designed for Arnold Lee of Mason Pearson at 45-46 Albemarle Street, Mayfair.[402] As chief assistant, Duncan assumed a high degree of responsibility in the office, and an investigation of the Goldfinger archives held at the RIBA revealed that for much of his time in the office he was heavily involved in all aspects of the practice. He is listed as the lead assistant for the Carr and Co office building in publications,[403] and the archives reveal that he assumed the same role with both the Regent's Park Road Flats and Albemarle Street project in

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[399] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[400] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[401] Directory of Architects and Buildings in Western Australia 1945-1996, Questionnaire, John Duncan. Private Collection, Simon Anderson.
[402] By January 1955, just 4 months after joining the office, Duncan was already signing his letters 'chief assistant'. See: The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/78/3.
[403] "Contractors etc," *The Architectural Review* 740, no. 124 (Sep 1, 1958), c210.

Mayfair throughout 1955.[404] Of these, he became most involved with the Albemarle Street project. Duncan was the corresponding architect for the first six months of its construction. He also produced the early drawings, arranged the preliminary works, and engaged in various on-site disputes involving building surveyance, and other issues, particularly those relating to the party walls and chimney stacks of the neighbouring lots.[405] Detailed site visit records show that Duncan was on site up to four times a week for much of 1955, and attended the majority of the weekly site meetings together with Goldfinger until he left the office in December to return home to Perth.[406] Indeed, almost all correspondence regarding the job during 1955 is signed off with the initials EG/JKD/RFG (Goldfinger, Duncan and Gough), and a number of letters in the archive are addressed to Mr Duncan, indicating the degree of responsibility he had over the job. During his time on the Albemarle job, Duncan had a number of assistants working alongside him, including John Roberts, Denise Scott Brown and John Winter, who would continue on once Duncan left.[407] Notes on the Regent's Road flats indicate a similar level of involvement, liaising with clients, assisting in interior decorating advice and attending a number of site visits, particularly in Goldfinger's absence.[408]

Further evidence for Duncan's position within the office is found in an interview within the British Library's 'Architects' Lives' series' conducted with John Roberts who was employed by Goldfinger at the same time as Duncan, and who took over the Albemarle Street job. Interviewed in 2002, he precisely detailed the office staff and the general environment, and the particularly volatile nature of the office which he recalled Duncan was capable of withstanding:

> His chief assistant at the time was an Australian. For some reason he often employed Australians… [Duncan] was a marvelous character and he knew just how to cope with Erno. Being Hungarian, Erno was extremely voluble, and John Duncan

[404] John Roberts took over the job when Duncan left, and when the project was published in 1958 Roberts is listed as the lead assistant. See: "Contractors etc," *The Architectural Review* 740, no. 124 (Sep 1, 1958), c210.
[405] Duncan's involvement in issues concerning the party walls and chimney stacks are documented in: The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/79/3.
[406] The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/81/4.
[407] Minutes of Site Meetings 1955-57. The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/81/6.
[408] Numerous references to Duncan's involvement on the project can be found within the project files within the Goldfinger archive at the RIBA. See for example: The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/456/7; GolEr 456/4; GolEr 456/3; GolEr 457/2; GolEr 458/15; GolEr 458/11

> was very taciturn… He just let all this stuff wash over him and didn't react, or at least didn't react adversely.[409]

Duncan, Goldfinger and Rosemary Gough remained in touch over the years, and clearly their relationship meant a lot, at least to Duncan. While sailing home aboard the Southern Cross a month after leaving the office, Duncan wrote a letter to the whole Goldfinger office, writing of his exploits aboard.[410] The fact that Goldfinger retained this letter, and there is a section in the Goldfinger archive for his later correspondence with Duncan suggests that relationship was clearly mutual. Duncan would send Christmas cards to Erno and Ursula Goldfinger well into the 1970s, and in the immediate years of his return there is evidence of regular communication between Goldfinger, Gough and Duncan. When Duncan published a special issue of *The Architect* on modern architecture in Perth he sent a copy to Erno, and when the projects that Duncan had worked on were published in the 1963 special issue of *Architectural Design*, Erno sent him a copy. In a letter to Duncan apologizing for his slow correspondence Erno remarked, "you are still being quoted as the best assistant I ever had… When are you coming to England?" [411] Duncan's wife Beth, who was in London on a working holiday at the same time as John, met Erno a number of times and recalled that Goldfinger has reportedly offered John a partnership when he left, which Duncan thought "was an empty threat to get him to stay."[412]

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[409] Cathy Courtney, Interview with John Roberts. National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives, 2002. British Library, C467/69.
[410] The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections GolEr/268/4
[411] Erno Goldfinger, Letter to John Duncan, 10 January, 1960. The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections GolEr/269/1
[412] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.

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Fig 3.10 Albemarle Street Offices, London. Erno Goldfinger 1957. John Duncan, chief assistant. Photographer: Colin Westwood, RIBA Collections.

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Fig 3.11 Carr and Co Offices, Birmingham. Erno Goldfinger 1954. John Duncan, chief assistant. *The Architectural Review* 124, no. 740 (September 1, 1958): 153.

3.2.11 Other Experiences

Duncan's experience at Goldfinger's office provides an insight into the kinds of duties and daily tasks that the graduates undertook as assistants and demonstrates the high level of responsibility assumed by many of the graduates. Further insights into the lived experience, and the office environment encountered by the graduates can be drawn from oral histories and life writing accounts, which, together with the archival traces of Duncan, and the project list outlined above, begin to build a full picture of the graduate experience of this time. Bill Weedon worked at Chamberlin Powell and Bon for eight months between 1957-58, primarily on the Golden Lane Estate and the Two Saints School in Southwark. He recalled his time in the office as an amazing and radical experience, but that the day-to-day jobs were mostly straight-forward drawing and office documentation tasks. He described the office environment as extremely welcoming, and that there was no barrier between the principals and the staff, that it was an 'open' office

environment in both senses of the word.[413] Weedon worked as an architectural assistant within the office where his primary tasks were related to the preparation and production of drawings. The work was varied but would largely entail detail design development work, working from designs generated by the practice leaders and together with senior assistants like George Agabeg or Michael Neylan. There was little involvement directly with the site or with builders, but within the office the assistants were the problem solvers, and he worked closely with technical services and quantity surveyors. Weedon recalls, for instance, developing a close working relationship with manufacturers like Crittal Windows, and he worked with their technicians to solve details, installation and specification options on the Golden Lane Estate.[414]

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Fig 3.12 Two Saints School, London. Chamberlin, Powell & Bon, 1958-61. Bill Weedon, assistant. Photographer: John Maltby, RIBA Collections.

[413] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[414] Bill Weedon, telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 30 July 2021.

The letters that Edwin Whitaker wrote home to his parents provide perhaps the only contemporary perspective that survive, written during his time within these offices. The letters provide an insight into his daily experience within these offices, written while he navigated the complex world of British architectural practice and his own developing architectural attitudes. His letters, written for the benefit of his parents, hence not overly architectural, provide spare but crucial details of his time in the office: "The situation of the office is roughly this. Denis Clarke Hall does all the design and we are there just to do the hack work – Drawing up the jobs and so on."[415] But while they were doing the 'hack' work, they were of course learning and Whitaker's letters are peppered with references to his positive experiences in the office. Whitaker worked mostly on secondary schools and he notes "I'm learning quite a bit from the chaps, mainly about the uses and applications of the latest materials. These schools finish up a mixture of aluminium, glass and a bit of steel and brickwork to hold things together. Cork Flooring, acoustic tile ceilings and good furniture all help to finish these schools very well."[416] Later he wrote, "Three of us started on a new school today – this time a Technical School with trade blocks, domestic science… etc. This should prove rather interesting."[417] His letters also provide an insight into the kind of office conditions that the graduates experienced, often working long hours to meet project deadlines, an observation made by a number of other interviewees:

> Apart from a game of hockey on Saturday afternoon the last week has been work, work and more work. In all I did about 24 hours overtime. However, the new Basildon School Dwgs went off to the quantity surveyor this morning dead on time. I won't vouch for the accuracy of some of the drawings because they were done at all hours of the night.[418]

Whitaker's letters demonstrated that the architects were acutely aware of the opportunities that were available to them in London and were keen to ensure that they got the most out of the experience. They were not simply passing the time in the offices - they had aspirations and

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[415] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 17 July 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[416] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 17 July 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[417] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 17 July 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[418] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 19 October 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

ambitions to progress their career and personal development during their time in the UK. Whitaker noted a desire to move on, with the intention to further his career development: "There is no future at Denis Clarke Hall's office as I am only employed as a temporary and consequently not eligible to do any supervision."[419] Whitaker left Clarke Hall's office at the end of 1953 and went to work for Clive Pascall where he was afforded more responsibility at least in the first instance. He worked on a scheme for the widely publicized Kirkcaldy crematoria competition, where he was able to undertake research on the topic, design the proposed scheme, and produce the cost estimate for the scheme.[420]

As the decade progressed it is clear that this kind of responsibility was soon held by a number of the travelling students as they began to carve out a space for themselves as those middling modern practices developed. Rather than simply being part of the 'hack work', they were often afforded increased responsibility and even authorship. People like Ross Chisholm, who were among the first employees of the newly formed partnership of Chamberlin Powell and Bon, would be increasingly credited for their role in publications, and their contributions were clearly of significant value to the firms. Chisholm worked for the practice from September 1954 until September 1958, with a year break in the middle when he returned to Perth. Many of CPBs major projects from this period credit Chisholm as assistant on the jobs. The first was Bousfield Primary School, where he is credited together with other CPB stalwarts John Connaughton and Michael Neylan. Chisholm was further acknowledged on the Golden Lane Estate, both the first stage and the Goswell Road stage together with Bill Weedon, along with, in the 1959 Barbican report which was submitted to the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London, Ronald and Clare Ferguson and Eugene Mapp, as shown at the introduction of this thesis.[421] Ronald Jack (Gus) Ferguson spent 18 months with CPB working primarily on the Barbican, but also on the Leeds University scheme, acting as 'Joe's right hand man' and was afforded a high level of responsibility within the firm.[422]

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[419] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 15 November 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

[420] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 8 March 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker. The ability to produce a scheme for consideration demonstrates the level of responsibility afforded to Whitaker at the time. This competition received 237 entries, and was won by Sanger and Rothwell, but high profile entrants included the Smithsons. For details see: "News," *The Architects' Journal* 119, no. 3092 (1954): 675.

[421] Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, *Barbican Redevelopment* (1959), n.p.

[422] R.J. Ferguson, telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 29 March 2022.

Without being able to describe the exact contributions of each student, the insights from Duncan's time with Goldfinger, the personal accounts of Whitaker and Weedon, and the increasingly visible recognition of people like Chisholm and Ferguson through published project credits, indicate a level of responsibility and respect that was afforded students within the offices, which increased as the decade progressed. It is clear that Perth architects had desirable skills to offer these postwar British offices, further demonstrated through the long chains of repeat employment observed at firms like CPB and Goldfinger, and later Architect's Co-partnership and Howard Lobb, a habit which lasted well in the 1960s.

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Fig 3.13 Bousfield Primary School, London. Chamberlin Powell & Bon, 1956. Ross Chisholm, assistant. Photographer: John Maltby, RIBA Collections.

Assistants in charge, M. G. Thomas, W. Williams.
Architectural assistants, M. Neylan, P. Deakins,
R. Sabbiki, W. Wheedon, J. Connaughton, R. Chisholm.
Structural engineers, Ove Arup and Partners.
Heating consultant, H. J. Knox. Quantity surveyors,
Davis, Belfield and Everest.

Fig 3.14 Project credits for Crescent House, Golden Lane Estate with Chisholm and Weedon (misspelled). Chamberlin Powell & Bon, 1958. *The Architectural Review* 132, no. 790 (December 1, 1962): 394.

3.2.12 Exposure to a Different Office Culture

While the technical training and high level of practical knowledge afforded them responsibility and confidence in the offices, it also meant they were unfamiliar with different cultural aspects of architectural practice at the time. Coming from offices in Perth that were almost uniformly run as commercial practices, their immersion in a world of practice which encouraged conversation and reflection was rather unexpected. This was one of the more confronting aspects of culture shock that the graduates would experience. John Duncan recalls this when he arrived at Goldfinger's office.

> It was quite alien… despite Robbie's [W.H. Robertson] interest in overseas things, he was very much a person who was interested in building construction rather than architectural design philosophy – we were trained to know how a box framed window worked and we knew how to make a timber frame house or a brick house. I don't think we'd ever essayed into Corb's Modulor or anything like, that was still quite alien to us before we finished. We were much more concerned with getting a building that fitted together than getting one that would hit the journals.

> So we arrived in England, working for Goldfinger who more interested in preparing articles for the journals about his work than satisfying the client.[423]

For those that found jobs in more commercial practices, with standard drafting and documentation tasks, the transition from Perth to Britain was relatively easy. But for those who made their way to more progressive practices like Goldfinger and CPB, ones engaged with current architectural discourse, the challenge was instead in learning this different culture. As Duncan suggests, this was perhaps the most obviously different aspect about working in Britain. While the different typologies and heritage contexts could be negotiated quickly with their thorough practical knowledge, and a conversion to the metric system was straight forward, the cultural understanding of architecture and architectural practice itself would prove vastly different. These were things that were discussed within the Association but were rarely experienced in the office culture of Perth architectural practice. Those who worked in the CPB offices recalled the enlightened and radical atmosphere of the office, which would regularly host talks, exhibitions and encourage a camaraderie amongst its workers that would live on outside of the office. Weedon particularly recalled the enthusiastic and social atmosphere of the office: "they were just so ready to welcome people… there was no barrier whatsoever in personal contact."[424] Weedon was an avid photographer and captured the social and tight-knit atmosphere of the office on the occasion of the 1957 Christmas party in series of beautiful black and white photographs, reflecting the vibrancy of the office culture.

[423] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[424] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.

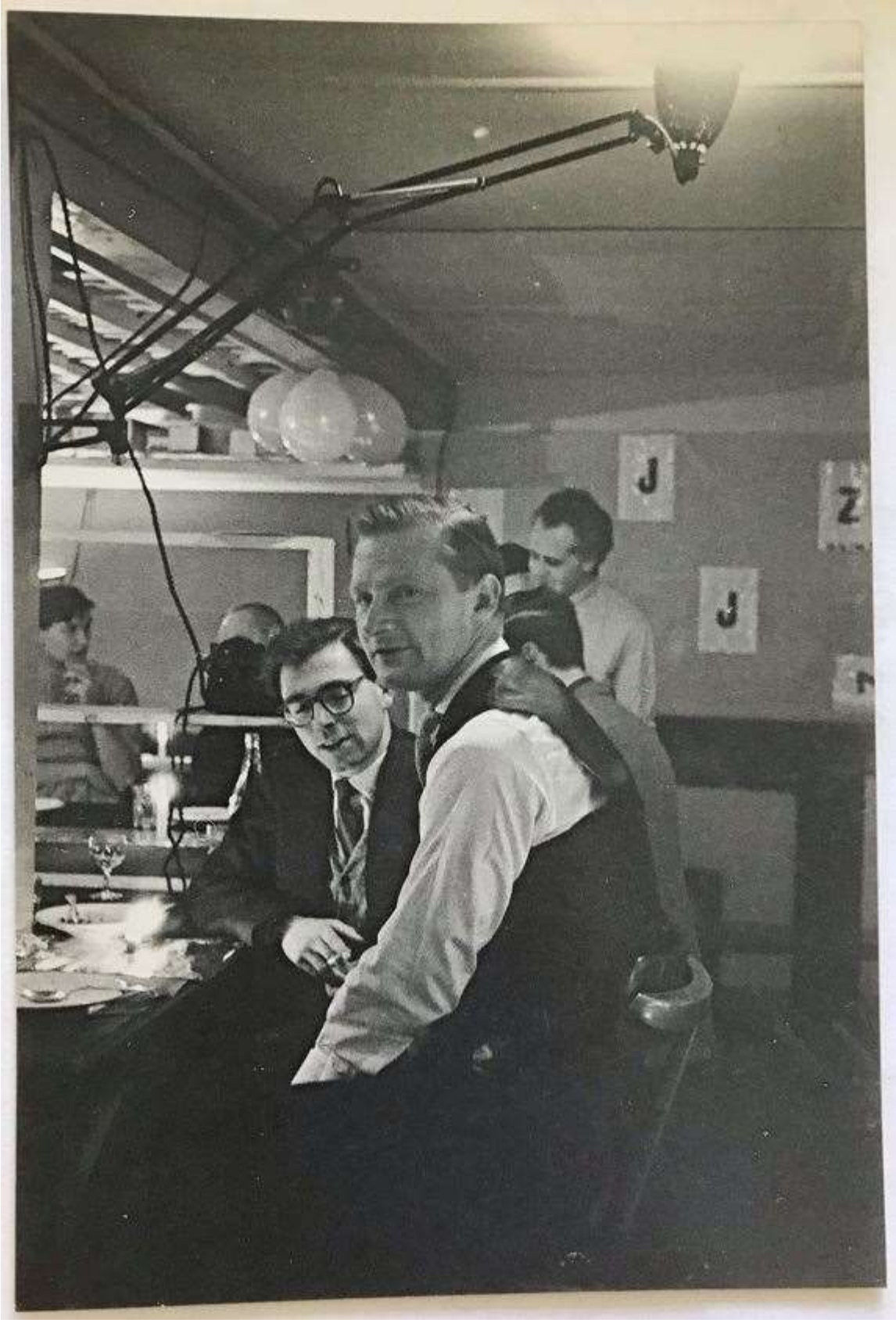
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Fig 3.15 Chamberlin, Powell & Bon office Christmas party 1957. Photographer: Bill Weedon, courtesy of Bill Weedon.

The office environment and relationships formed with their fellow workers would provide one of the most valuable and memorable experiences for many of the graduates. Given the centrality of the architectural office or atelier in the production of architecture, their potential as an active site of discourse is often overlooked in the historiography.[425] In the case of these visiting architects from Western Australia, the office itself offered formative experiences in terms of developing their own architectural understanding and internal discourse. The office offered an exposure to a wide array of different working methods, material conventions, office politics, and the art of architectural publicity. But it was also a place where they were able to experience the diversity of practice and culture in Britain. The offices saw them placed in direct contact with a diverse array of people, but mostly other assistants in the office. From the overwhelmingly British-based office make up of Perth, in London the graduates found themselves part of a lively network which reflected the global nature of practice in the metropolitan centre. To give one example: at CPB, Ferguson recalled vividly the international nature of the office and being exposed to different cultures and perspectives, and fondly recalled the close relationship he had with Ranjit Sabhiki, later a leading modern architect in India, who he sat next to everyday in the office.[426] The office environment exposed the graduates to a range of diverse ideas and architectural backgrounds, providing another interface of the trip in which graduates were able to engage with global architecture culture and experience the breadth of what an architectural career and practice could be.

In acknowledging the office as another site where architectural discourse is made and exchanged, it opens up a number of avenues of future inquiry for architectural history. The office itself offers a site which centres the diversity present in the postwar practice environment, including multiple nationalities, women, and professional staff, and can further acknowledge their role in shaping and facilitating architectural ideas. An examination of the architectural office exposes the hidden networks and relationships which ran through the architectural profession of this time, as they

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[425] Key texts which have addressed the significance of the architectural office include: Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice*; Judith Blau, *Architects and Firms: A Sociological Perspective of Architectural Practices* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); Robert Gutman, *Architectural Practice: A Critical View* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988); Deborah van der Plaat, Lloyd Jones, *The Architecture of Robin Gibson* (Melbourne: URO Publications, 2022); Ruth Lang, "Orchestration of an Organisation: The Bureaucratic Frameworks of the London County Council Architect's Department," in *Largest Architectural Firms: Design Authorship and Organization Management,* eds. Lorenzo Ciccarelli, Lorenzo Mingardi, and Sara Lombardi (Firenze: Edifir, 2021), 70-81; Peggy Deamer, *Architecture and Labor* (New York: Routledge, 2020).
[426] R.J. Ferguson, telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 29 March 2022.

formed across the drafting table, in meeting rooms and in the tea rooms or lunch bars. An understanding of the office culture, a place where ideas are freely shared, debated and exchanged, further breaks down the emphasis on exclusive authorship and opens up a series of diverse threads which clearly ran through the production of architecture in Britain in this period.

One thread of particular interest here, is in how an understanding of office culture exposes the notion of exchange which took place postwar architectural practice. Traditional narratives have tended to portray Australian architects taking part in a simple one-way exchange which saw them travel to Europe to learn and absorb the lessons of the metropolitan centre, with no suggestion that they may have offered anything in return.[427] But as this chapter has shown, this was clearly not the case. Rather, those architects from WA made active contributions of both intellectual and physical labour within the British architectural profession and one that has yet to be recognised. The identification of their work as assistants and the roles they played within the teams that enabled the postwar building boom in Britain, provides further insight into the complex machinations of postwar British architecture culture. Further, by highlighting the assistant's role in the office, it reveals the diversity and complexity that underpin the production of these projects, and makes clear that their construction was made possible by a dense network of assistants and office staff that were drawn together from across the world across old Imperial lines. These assistants brought with them a range of skills and ideas that fundamentally shaped these projects, and it further emphasises the intertwined nature of architecture culture in the postwar period in the nascent stages of a globalized profession. These architects from Perth were embedded within, and were central to, the success of some of the most significant and well respected offices of the period. Offering cheap labour, reliability, and importantly, hired on limited contracts, the identification of their efforts adds complexity and nuance to the story of postwar British architecture and demonstrates that imperial relationships continued to have an influence long after the supposed decline of the Empire.

3.2.13 Conclusion

Given the fragmented records, failing memories, and the sheer number of graduates that went and worked in the UK in the 1950s, it is impossible to articulate the truly diverse range of experiences they had within British offices. For some, their time in the office was a straight-

[427] See for example: Micheli and Wilson, "International influences in Post-War Queensland: Protagonists, Destinations and Models," 125 -127; and Drew, *Leaves of Iron*, 17-20.

forward affair. For them, employment provided a good wage, good experience, and was not particularly taxing on their time which allowed them more time to travel and explore London. For others, like those who worked at Chamberlin Powell and Bon, the office was a challenging, but rewarding environment. It was intellectually stimulating and expanded their knowledge of architecture and culture.

With their practical training and extensive office experience from Perth, the students found that they had a lot to offer British practice and they gained employment easily, using their experience to leverage themselves into better paying jobs, which offered more opportunities and experience. Working in the UK provided them with exposure to a vastly expanded field of architectural practice and placed them in direct contact with jobs of varying scales that dealt with a variety of new conditions including complex historic contexts, bomb sites, and large industrial facilities. It provided them with access to some of the UK's most powerful and influential architects and their clients, and entry into a professional world unimaginable in Perth.

For some the office experience was likely prosaic, particularly for those working in large commercial practices where the opportunity for discussion and interaction was limited. But for those that were able to work within smaller, progressive practices, the lingering influence and personal education was clearly in the cultural aspect of architecture rather than anything practical that they would learn at the drawing boards. And it was in this space – regardless of the office culture – that this thesis suggests the real power of the working holiday occurs. Ian Molyneux, himself a graduate of PTC who worked for Goldfinger shortly after Duncan, wrote in his unsurpassed survey of postwar architecture in Western Australia: "The practice of overseas travel upon attaining academic qualification was widespread among young architects… It is unlikely that many learned much more than they would have done at home, but they learned a great deal about different life styles and their perceived place in the world".[428] For the architects of the Association, it was the experience of being in Britain, of living away from home, and the stark cultural shock both in and out of the office that would prove to have the most valuable and long lasting effect, and this is examined further in the next chapter.

[428] Ian Molyneux, "Buildings in Western Australia 1940-1979," in *Western Town and Buildings,* eds. John White and Margaret Pitt Morison (Nedlands: UWA Press, 1979), 137.

Fig 3.16 Architectural Office (Most likely the office of Denis Clarke Hall). Photo: Edwin Whitaker. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

Chapter 3.3 Living in the UK (and the Joy of Using London as a Base)

3.3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines life outside the architectural office as experienced by members of the Association that had travelled on a working holiday. It documents the living arrangements, their engagement with the city and its culture, travels across the UK and the continent, and their self-directed interests in architecture that developed outside of the office. It tracks the talks they attended, the buildings they visited, along with the numerous plays, concerts and performances they saw. It pays particular attention to the social milieu in which the graduates found themselves embedded, in which they were just one part of a growing group of other young Australian expatriates including journalists, teachers, and nurses, who had travelled to London to live, work, and see the world. While the chapter is focused on their time spent living in London, it also examines the extensive travels they undertook while stationed there, both within the UK and internationally. This was an important aspect of their time in UK, and living in the UK, particularly in London, implied travelling as often and as widely as you could. The relative ease of visiting Europe and the English countryside was one of the main attractions for those prospective travellers and would figure heavily in their experience and recollection of their journeys.

The time that the architects spent working as assistants in some of the leading British practices provided them with considerable professional standing, office experience, and an understanding of global practice which they could use to shape their careers back home. But it was their time outside the office, both professionally and personally, which would have a more profound and long-lasting effect on their lives. This chapter argues that it was outside the office where young Perth architects were able to explore their own interests, with the space to examine their own identities, foster social networks, and negotiate a series of relationships which would come to define their practices, their architectural approach, and their world view. In London the members of the Association found themselves wrenched from their tight-knit Perth community and immersed in a world where they were exposed to the diversity of world culture and architectural practice. It was during these moments of unfamiliarity which saw their views and ideas – both architecturally and personally - challenged, tested, and reaffirmed.

Given the available sources that allow for insights into these more personal aspects of the journey, the chapter is centered on a group of people who lived and worked together in London between

1953 and 1956. The letters that Edwin Whitaker wrote home to his parents, the diaries that Ross Chisholm dutifully kept, along with interviews conducted with John White, John Duncan, Barbara Hill and Beth Duncan, provide the focus of the chapter. These sources provided a clear and vivid account of life in London during the early 1950s. They also provided details and minutiae otherwise lost to time. Their lives overlapped considerably at this time, and these sources provide a rare insight into the sociable nature of the journey which they shared together.

The period from 1953 to 1956 would prove to be a particularly intensive moment for the working holiday. It was a time when a critical mass of students from the first graduating years of the PTC class travelled together, joined by a large contingent of other Western Australians, including former members of the Association, women from their broader social group, and a group of Sydney architects with whom they would become close. Together they formed a mutable, but identifiable group of young Australians living and working in close proximity, centered around the emerging 'little Australia' area of Earl's Court and Kensington. This group lived a shared experience that was aided by an intensity that their new urban life afforded them, which collapsed the enormous physical breadth of Australia into a few square miles of central London. This shared experience would be absorbed and brought home where it would play a major role in the making of modern culture in Perth.

3.3.2 Living Together in SW5 (and Further Afield)

The period between 1953 and 1956 saw a critical mass of Association students and a broader social group from Western Australia descend on London. During this intense three-year period, there were at least 14 recent graduates from PTC living there, along with a handful of former PTC students and Association members that had either dropped out or switched courses to explore disciplines like photography, engineering and industrial design. This meant that at some points, particularly around the middle of 1954, there was more than 12 members of the Association living and working in close quarters, providing an active and engaged social group through which to explore the city and the country. Much of this was enhanced by the students living in close proximity to one another centered around the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, with SW5, Earl's Court, as the nucleus. Known as 'Little Australia' or Kangaroo Valley, SW5 became infamous in the 1960s through the exploits of high-profile Australian expats like Barry

Humphries.[429] During the interwar years and the late 1940s, Perth architects had been typically dispersed across London, but from the early 1950s they began to concentrate in these areas where dense Australian expatriate communities had begun to form and the members of the Association soon joined the growing scene. John Lidbury in his guide to the working holiday again notes:

> "There seems to be plenty of accommodation in London at all times. Even during the peak of the tourist season, from May to September, there is any amount of cheap, clean accommodation available, especially in the Earls Court and Kensington districts, about five miles from the heart of London. "West Australia House," The Strand, London will soon find suitable rooms if necessary, or put you onto somebody who can.[430]

Accommodation was found through the usual channels of newspaper advertisements in the *Evening Standard*, or notices posted on local noticeboards. As Lidbury identified, the first stop for newly arrived travellers was to the Agent General's office at Savoy House, or 'West Australia House' on the Strand to register their arrival in the UK and access their accommodation finding services. There were also clubs like the Down Under Residential Club, and the Overseas Visitors' Club which acted as meeting points for Australians in London and offered short stay accommodation and facilitated networks which helped arrange housing.[431]

Living in SW5 would provide a complete contrast to the slower and decidedly suburban experience of Perth in the early 1950s. Most of the architects and their social milieu that came over at this time were still living with their parents in Perth's suburbs, or very occasionally in share houses spread out across the metropolitan area. This meant the experience of living in an urban area, in close proximity to the city centre serviced by regular and efficient public transport, was an experience that was almost totally foreign. With rapid transport infrastructure and dense urban high streets, living in London in the 1950s provided a radical change of scene for those arriving from Perth. Most found houses together, either with their partner or in terrace houses that they

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[429] Most notably it was the backdrop for the film 'The Adventures of Barry McKenzie' written by Humphries and filmed in SW5.
[430] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," *The Architect* (September 1954), 15.
[431] A selection of these membership cards and other ephemera were accumulated by Ross Chisholm on his journey. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm. Also see: Rodney Burbeck, "Life in Kangaroo Valley, SW5," *Tatler* May 7, 1966, 8-9.

would share together as groups of three or four. The most influential and long lasting of these was 48 Hogarth Road, SW5 which became a key hub for visiting Perth architects, and from 1953 to 1956 at least six members of the Association lived there in different combinations.

3.3.3 Living at 48 Hogarth Road

Edwin Whitaker arrived in London in May 1953, following his year in South Africa, and moved to Kingsbury where he would stay temporarily with family friends. He then spent a few months living in Bath while working for McMillan, before returning to Kingsbury as he awaited the arrival of White, Duncan and Leunig. In July the trio arrived in London and together with Whitaker decided they should rent a flat together. In October they finally found a suitable place, and the four moved in over several weekends. The flat at 48 Hogarth Road, Earl's Court saw them occupy the entire first floor of a typical five storey Georgian terrace house, complete with a balcony which opened from the living room onto the street. By the time they had moved to Earl's Court there was already a strong contingent of Western Australians in the area, and the house soon became a social hub within this growing community. The housewarming party was keenly reported upon, and it demonstrates the kind of community that had developed around them:

> Whilst not motoring, Jack [John White] shares a flat with Dunk, Leunig and Whitaker in an exclusive part of Kensington. The housewarming they put on attracted no less than thirty blow-ins, mostly Westralians. That was the night that Toscanini refused to wave his baton in the Albert Hall until the Australian party next door cut out singing 'I'm Jolly Jack the Ripper'.[432]

The 'thirty blow-ins' that attended the house-warming were likely drawn from their expanded social circle from Perth, who had also embarked upon their own working holiday. At the time that White, Duncan, Leunig and Whitaker had left, they had amassed a considerable social standing within Perth through the Association, which had become one of the most visible and active groups in an emerging new Perth cultural scene. This reputation was cemented through the increasingly popular Tee Square Balls, which by the early 1950s had become of the major social events of the year. The 1952 ball hosted almost 750 people per year,[433] and there were a number of other well attended but more informal 'dos' which they organized throughout the year alongside their

[432] "Student News," *The Architect*, 3, no. 34 (December 1953): 20.
[433] "People and Parties," *The West Australian,* May 20, 1952, 7.

lecture series and more serious affairs.[434] In 1952, the Association was led by Duncan as President, White as Vice President and John Lidbury as secretary and this social standing would have been replicated within the fast growing community of Western Australians in SW5.[435]

Hogarth Road would see a number of visitors pass through its doors and became an essential stop-off for arriving visitors – both from the Association and broader social fields. From 1953 until 1956 when it disbanded, the house became part of the lived geography for Western Australians in London. After a year there, John White moved out with Lex Hill, and fellow Association member Stuart Coll took his place. In 1956 Ian Morison, an engineer and town planner, and the nephew of Margaret Pitt-Morison, moved in once Duncan and Whitaker had left. Ross Chisholm and John Lidbury spent their first Friday in London there for a slide night, and many others I talked to on the phone recalled the infamous house and its renown for frequent parties. [436] Others soon moved to the area. Alan Shepherd and his wife Joan moved to Addison Avenue in Holland Park, where they lived two doors down from the artist Patrick Heron. Chisholm and Lidbury moved into Bramham Gardens, John Hallam lived on Finborough Road, and Morris and Margaret Fairbrother lived in Onslow Gardens. As the decade progressed the arriving graduates began to spread out further afield, taking up residence in Ealing, Hampstead and Swiss Cottage, but the nucleus of Earl's Court would remain. Gus and Clare Ferguson moved to a flat there in Warwick Road,[437] joined shortly by Ron Bodycoat, Duncan Richards, Doug and Norma Stuart who shared a room in Earl's Court when they arrived in 1959 before moving to Hampstead.[438]

[434] "Student Notes," *The Architect* (June 1953): 19.
[435] "Student Notes," *The Architect* (June 1952): 14.
[436] Ross Chisholm personal diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm.
[437] Ross Chisholm address book. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm
[438] Ronald Bodycoat, interview with Andrew Murray, 19 December, 2018, Claremont, W.A..

Fig 3.17 Stuart Coll and others washing up, likely at 48 Hogarth Road, 1955. Private Collection, Stuart Coll jr.

3.3.4 Broader Social Circle

Joining the Association members in this dense network of Australians centred around SW5 were three other significant social groupings. First were a series of Association members that had begun their studies at PTC and had since changed careers, along with those that had gone through the Board system. This group included Ron Facius, who had left architecture to study industrial design in London; David Foulkes-Taylor who had studied design at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Holborn before moving to Bath to run a furniture factory; William Angove, who had left architecture to pursue photography; Peter Bruechle, an engineer, along with Tony Ralph and Peter Arney who were board registered architects and members of the Association.[439] They remained close friends with the PTC graduates, and dropped by Hogarth road on a number of occasions.[440] The student notes section kept close tabs on this broader group, including a report on the 1953 Christmas party which was attended by a number of Association members and hosted by Joan and Alan Shepherd. [441]

As discussed in the Introduction, the working holiday to the UK was a phenomenon which occurred across all Australian states in varying modes. Unsurprisingly then, the research identified a contingent of architects from Sydney that had settled around Earl's Court that became involved socially with the Perth group. They included Bruce and Mary Rickard who lived around the corner from Hogarth Road in Lexham Gardens, David Moore, the Sydney architectural photographer lived in Redcliffe Road, and architects Bill Burrows and Ken Woolley. Geoffrey Twibill, who was in London travelling on a scholarship from the University of Sydney, was also part of this group, and joined the AA together with White, Leunig and Duncan.[442] They formed a loose association of young Australian architects, and would frequently work together, pass on job details, travel, and socialize together. In these isolated encounters, which are expanded upon throughout this chapter, it is difficult to piece together an account of how extensive this Sydney group was and the

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[439] At one stage in 1957, Bill Angove, Ron Facius, Bill Weedon, Judith Holmes, Lois Robertson, George Palmer, and Peter Bruechle all shared a house together at 27 Lancaster Gate, W2. See: Richard Goodwin, *Sparks of Genius: The Inventive Photography of Bill Angove* (Unpublished manuscript, 2022).
[440] Whitaker recalls Foulkes-Taylor, who was close friends with John White, would always come by the house when he was in London. Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 26 November 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[441] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[442] Accounts of these Perth-Sydney relationships can be found in: See "Membership Elections," *The AA Journal* 69, no. 778 (January 1954): 168; "Membership Elections," *The AA Journal* 70, no. 788 (January 1955): 173; John White, Interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.; Michael Bogle, "Arthur Baldwinson: Regional Modernism in Sydney 1937-1969," (PhD dissertation, RMIT University, 2008), 375.

nature of their travels. But it is clear that they were an active presence within London during this time. Interestingly, during the period 1946-60, no evidence emerged of interactions with the Perth contingent and architects from other states.

But perhaps the most important, and certainly the largest by number, were an enormous group of young professional women who travelled to London with almost identical ambitions – to seek adventure, gain work experience, and to see the world. This was a group with considerable overlap with the Student Association and existed within the same broad social sphere in Perth.

Together, they formed a very loose group of young people, drawn together at key connection points, largely through a series of key relationships that would result in marriages, like Helen Twine and Edwin Whitaker, Beth Blair and John Duncan, Barbara Miller and Lex Hill, and Judith Holmes and Bill Weedon. This was a group that were close friends with many of the Association members, had studied together at University or the Technical College, regularly attended the Tee Square Balls and other architectural 'do's', and were generally part of a tight knit community in Perth of young, newly cosmopolitan people that would play a significant role in the development of the city in the following decades. Many of them had also formed connections through the burgeoning theatre world of Perth. An example can be found in the 1952 University of Western Australia Revue which featured skits performed by the Architectural Students' Association and starred a number of those who would soon travel to London together joining the community in Earl's Court including Barbara Miller, Anne West, June Eggleston and Joanna Ainslie.[443] During this period, young women traveled to the UK in numbers that far outweighed men, travelling together in large groups as they worked and explored their way across the UK and the continent. Their exploits were keenly followed in the local newspaper, with updates of their adventures and departure details regularly published and so their travels and leaving parties were very well covered. A typical example from May 1954 reads:

> News of the success of six girls who went to England a few months ago, has come to their parents and friends. They have settled into their new life comfortably with a house, a car and jobs. Almost the day they arrived they found a house in Hampstead, which has since then become the meeting place and a second home to many Australians in Britain. Two of the girls, Misses Anne West, of Dumbleyung,

[443] The Guild of Undergraduates of the U.W.A. – *The University Revue*, 1952, booklet. University of Western Australia Theatres: Collection of Ephemera Material. State Library of Western Australia, PR8065/THE/475.

> and June Eggleston, of Crawley, who are both University graduates, have jobs teaching on supply at schools in London. Misses Jennifer Flintoff, of Mosman Park, and Audrey Craike, of Nedlands, have had temporary typing jobs and both have been hitch-hiking. In April, Misses Pam and Barbara Miller, of Tambellup, joined the group, and in June they all intend going to the Continent for two months.[444]

The groups of women that travelled to the UK on working holidays formed a closely connected but distinct group when compared to the Association members. They were considerably more mobile and financially stable than their male counterparts, and had their own ambitions, agendas, and internal motivations, and should be understood as a separate phenomenon. A note in the *Western Mail* newspaper records the kind of densely overlapping social scene that was emerging, particularly amongst these women. Although some travelled alone or in pairs, they would enter into a packed social environment with friends and associates from home, which was an important aspect of the London experience.

> Packing woollies for England is DAWN HEDGES of Nedlands, who left in the Orion last Tuesday on a two-year trip. Dawn, a graduate in agricultural science, has been working in a biochemical laboratory. She is travelling alone, but in England will have Australian friends in June Eggleston, Wendy Lynch, Margaret Summers and Beth Blair.[445]

The period from 1953 to 1956 saw a number of similar journeys made, and together with the Association members, they formed a critical mass through which to explore and engage with the modern city. It is important to note that this was not a cohesive group – indeed many of the women I spoke to that went during this time barely knew, or only in passing, knew the architects I was investigating and likely never met them in London. But with several key connections through key relationships, they formed an identifiable group of Western Australians that participated in a shared experience of London and the perspective from home that the trip provided. They were there at the same time, in the same place, and experiencing the same kind of cosmopolitan, modern awakening across almost all facets of their life. It was a journey that provided a clear rupture from their lives in Perth. It was a shared experience that would be crucial to the shaping of Perth in the late 1950s, as these disparate groups of people returned to Perth and rejoined the

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[444] "W.A. Girls in London get car and Jobs," *The West Australian,* May 17, 1954, 14.
[445] Alison, "People," *Western Mail,* February 18, 1954, 21.

tight-knit community there, with a distinct taste for modern urbanity they had collectively experienced in London.

An example of these shared social spheres can be seen through the travels of Barbara Hill (nee Miller), who became an important member of the Perth cultural community in the late 1950s, particularly through her involvement with the Shiralee coffee house, which will be examined in detail in the next chapter. Her story, which she relayed to me over the phone, through letters, and later on a trip down to her house in Albany, describes the dense overlaps and social connections that these journeys created as she merged with the larger Australian contingent in London. In March 1954, Barbara, a recent arts graduate from UWA, and her sister Pamela, a kindergarten teacher, set off aboard the SS Orontes from Fremantle Port, headed for London, as reported in *The West Australian* article above. They were joining their friends June Eggleston and her cousin Audrey Craike, Anne West and Jennifer Flintoff, who had travelled together, and would shortly be joined by Pamela Mawby, Marlene Cockburn, June Milne and the journalist Joanna Ainslie.[446] The group was a mix of teachers, journalists and recent arts graduates from UWA. Barbara had recently begun a relationship with Alexander (Lex) Hill, a recent graduate from the architecture school at Perth Technical College having met at a number of the architectural 'do's and they had intended to meet up later in London. On the boat across, Barbara and Pamela met Sydney architect Bruce Rickard and his wife Mary and the four became friends, attending events together on board like the fancy dress balls. Barbara and Pamela first moved into temporary lodgings at Redcliffe Gardens, Earl's Court for six months, before Pamela returned home to Perth that December. Barbara then moved around the corner into a flat at 39 Redcliffe Road together with Jennifer Flintoff, Joanna Ainslie and June Eggleston, where the chief tenant was Sydney photographer David Moore. Flintoff and Moore shortly began a relationship and were later married, and so Moore was folded into this broader social group.

In April 1955, Barbara and Lex Hill were married in Sussex, where Lex had family connections. This event was typical of the instances where these overlapping social circles converged, and the small gathering of 30 or so people were drawn from this group. John White was the best man, Joanna Ainslie the bridesmaid, and many members of the Association were there, along with those that

[446] Andrew Murray, "What to Do with 'Thirty Blow Ins' at a Housewarming Party: Peripheral Figures and Architectural History," In *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand: 37, What If? What Next? Speculations on History's Futures,* eds. Kate Hislop and Hannah Lewi (Perth: SAHANZ, 2021): 584-589; Barbara Hill, telephone communication with Andrew Murray, 22 March, 2022.

Barbara had travelled on the ship over with. The Rickards both attended, and David Moore was their wedding photographer, gifting the photos to the couple. Around this time, White and Lex Hill had moved in together, and White began working with Bruce Rickard at Wallis Gilbert and Partners, an arrangement surely organized through the contact with Barbara and Pamela Miller. White would remain in touch with Rickard, and even attended some of the meetings in Sydney of what has come to be known as 'The Sydney School'.[447]

"This image/material has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons"

Fig 3.18 Taken from the steps of 39 Redcliffe Road, where Barbara Miller lived with David Moore, 1954. Photographer: David Moore. Courtesy of Lisa Moore.

[447] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October 2019, Bunbury, W.A.

"This image/material has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons”

Fig 3.19 Barbara and Lex Hill’s wedding. Bottom Right, John White giving a best man speech. Top Right: Joanna Ainslie (seated), John Duncan (centre), Marlene Cockburn (Second from Right), Anne West (Right). Photographer: David Moore. Private Collection, Barbara Hill.

Viewing the experience of the Association members together with this broader group is essential to understanding the phenomenon of the working holiday. It shows that the working holiday was a widespread phenomenon, undertaken by a number of young, mobile people from Australia who formed a shared network that would benefit both parties. It was through this expanded network that key relationships were formed, both personal and professional, and they became crucial to the success of the trip. One of these key connections was Judith Holmes, a fashion designer and textile artist who had trained under Percy Ivor Hunt and Howard Taylor at PTC, graduating in 1953 with a Commercial and Fine Arts diploma.[448] Holmes had significant connections within the Perth art and theatre community, particularly through her work designing theatrical sets with architect Peter Parkinson, and so was well known within the cultural sphere.[449] After working for a period in Perth's leading commercial art studio, Gibbney and Sons, then headed by John Lunghi, Holmes made the trip to London in 1956 together with fellow Gibbney studio artist Lois Robertson.[450] On board, Holmes and Robertson became friendly with a group of Sydney creatives including the architect Ken Woolley. Once in London, Holmes found work as a fashion illustrator, and the group remained in touch. Holmes was soon joined in London by her partner Bill Weedon, and he recalls that the couple had Woolley over for dinner on at least one occasion. It was through this connection that Weedon found his job at Chamberlin Powell and Bon. When Woolley had to return to Australia he suggested that Weedon take over his drawing board at the firm, which he did.[451]

These growing social networks, which the tight urban setting of London made legible and accessible, brought all these people from Perth and across Australia together in close proximity. With the infrastructure and freedom to meet and explore the city together, this dense network of relationships that formed would have lasting influences back home. The time they spent together in London saw the enormous geographies of Australia collapsed into a few square kilometres of central London. This meant that a whole group of people from across Australia were thrust into close proximity with each other in a manner unthinkable in Australia. It was not that they were unaware of each other – indeed there is clear correspondence between student architect groups across Australia – but here they could mix regularly, and engage in a different manner that would

[448] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.
[449] See: Kelly, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture,* 7; "Their World a Stage," *The Daily News,* 18 July, 1953, 12.
[450] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.
[451] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.

form lasting relationships. Crucially for this study, the distance of Perth itself was collapsed. The 20km radius that encompassed the Perth suburbs, within which the students were scattered, was also reduced, in some instances to a few streets within SW5. This would prove to be a key factor in the acceleration of relationships, along with significant personal and professional networks, and it provided a taste of intense urban living which they would bring back home.

3.3.5 Exploring the City

Together, this dense network of Western Australians set out to explore all the excitement and cosmopolitanism that postwar London had to offer, which John Duncan described as a "non-stop show".[452] Together they visited the opera, the ballet, and the theatre. They attended shows at Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall as often as they could afford. They sought out restaurants, the new wave of coffee shops, taking advantage of affordable ticket prices, and a burgeoning youth-oriented cultural scene far away from the small offerings of Perth.[453] Whitaker recounted it all to his parents, describing the typical outings: "Wednesday night we all went to a Promenade concert at the Albert Hall – Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting the BBC Symphony orchestra… Of course you have to stand up but it's well worth it – far better than the W.A orchestra concerts. Friday night Dunc and I went to the Festival Hall to see the ballet. We got good seats at 7/6 each so that we could get a better idea of the place. It is really a super concert hall. The boxes are, I think, a complete failure but generally speaking it's a jolly good effort at architecture."[454] These were frequent occurrences, and Whitaker's letters home are filled with reports of performances and visits to key galleries like the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Wallace Collection. A sample week from Ross Chisholm's London diary demonstrates the sheer enthusiasm for the city, attending multiple events per week, accompanied by fellow graduates or other friends from their broader circle. On Sunday the 20th of June 1954 he visited the recently completed Churchill Gardens estate in Pimlico with John Lidbury, and then went out for tea at the Thameside Restaurant before going to Royal Festival Hall to see a performance by Eugene Ormandy. On Wednesday he visited Lincoln Inn Fields, saw Denys Lasdun deliver a lecture at the AA, followed by drinks in the city afterwards with Ed Whitaker and Stuart Coll. On Friday he went to the

[452] John Duncan, letter to Arnold Potts, 14 January, 1954. Private Collection, Julie Potts.
[453] In particular this was a youth culture oriented around the new London coffee shops which will be explored in detail in the following chapter.
[454] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 9 August 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

Continentale Theatre to see French film 'Children of Love', and on Saturday he went to Wimbledon followed by an evening of cabaret. On Sunday the 27th he went to see the Duke of Edinburgh play in a Polo Match.[455] An exhausting week, but it demonstrates the enthusiasm for the city and a total immersion within it that was actively sought out.

It should be noted that London changed dramatically over those three years, and the experience varied between individuals. For many, London provided an exciting cosmopolitan shift from Perth, but it was often tempered by an ambivalence towards the city, using it primarily as an easy base for exploring the continent, rather than a destination in itself.[456] Those that arrived in the early years of the 1950s particularly found a city full of tensions. It was at once riddled with bomb damage, rations, and fear of a new war, which existed alongside an optimism and prosperity that was bubbling up, most visibly rendered through the emergence of a new youth culture - a "wave of rock 'n' roll records, coffee bars and brothel-creeper shoes."[457] John White described this ambivalence: "It [London] was sort of exciting. London was pretty drab in those days, whereas Italy, which had been not largely destroyed during the war, there were vibrant new buildings going up all over the place, good food. When I got to London they still had rationing!"[458] Beth Duncan recounted to me how quickly things changed in these short years:

> When the boys got there, they were all on rations – meat, sugar and butter. But by the time we arrived 10 months later the rationing had stopped…They got a sweet ration every Friday, and he [John Duncan] said people would come into the [Goldfinger] office on a Friday with a big bag of sweets and start chewing them – he couldn't believe it![459]

3.3.6 Architecture Outside of the Office

Alongside the theatre visits and the coffee shops, an attraction of living in the centre of London was the ability to participate in a dynamic architecture culture that happened outside of the office. Perth architects became immersed in the architectural scene of London in the 1950s, taking advantage of the numerous talks, events and tours that were on offer, along with actively seeking

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[455] Ross Chisholm personal diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm.
[456] For further discussion on London's significance as a base for exploring see: Davison, "Tourists, Expats and Invisible Migrants."
[457] Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 5.
[458] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[459] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.

out and visiting as many buildings within the capital as they could. Within Perth, this kind of architecture culture which was based on a critical examination and open discourse around the profession and its future, was a rare occurrence in the commercially driven atmosphere of Perth. As seen in the last chapter, some were able to access this culture within the office itself. But for most it was to be found in and around London. The sheer density of journals, talks, debates, exhibitions and visible critical reflection on practice in London provided a way to engage with the profession, beyond the largely commercial interests in Perth, where talk was limited to the business of building. This was one of the most exciting and bustling periods of architectural discourse in the city characterized by postwar optimism, the ease of material rationing and enlivened by the energetic debates over the future of modern architecture. When asked about working in the Goldfinger office, John Duncan replied that for him, the real architectural experiences more often happened outside of the office: "there was much more discussion in our flat [Hogarth Road], because we would go off every week or sometimes twice a week to the RIBA or the AA who would have a talk on by someone and we used to frequent those quite a bit, and we got a lot more discussion out of that sort of thing than from the office as such… This sort of thing was going on on an almost daily basis, so you became quite blasé about it in fact."[460] Together, they would host regular slide nights in their flats where they shared images and tales from recent trips abroad, along with having regular discussion and debate. As Duncan notes there were plenty of events happening, and he recalls hearing talks by a number of architects, but also importantly for him, people outside of the immediate profession. Duncan, together with others saw talks by Felix Samuely, Jacob Epstein and a particularly memorable series of talks from an unnamed leading air-conditioning engineer.[461] These were combined with talks by Denys Lasdun, Ove Arup, visits to Ideal Home exhibitions, and the 1953 Building Exhibition at the Olympia Exhibition Centre in Earls' Court which were all key events attended by Perth architects in this period.

The graduates who were members of the AA made the most of the connections and numerous events that were offered by the Association, and a survey of diaries, and the ephemera in archives kept by these architects reveals many of the events attended.[462] There were regular receptions,

[460] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[461] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[462] Ross Chisholm collection of ephemera, personal diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm. Alongside events recorded in the diary, Chisholm kept a number of theatrical handbills, exhibition catalogues etc.

guided tours, alongside rotating exhibitions including a survey of works by Peter L. Peri which Chisholm attended, and the library which they made good use of.[463] Edwin Whitaker, likely with others, went to at least two of the guided tours led by the AA in a month.[464] One was to the new London Airport central terminal designed by Frederick Gibberd, and a few weeks later, he joined another group bus tour to two new schools in the Hillingdon and Hounslow by Denis Clarke Hall and Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall.[465] That tour was led by John Stillman, the county architect for Middlesex, and was taken while Whitaker was still in Clarke Hall's office so he was likely familiar with the building and the guide.

Much of this architectural exploration was self-directed, particularly in the wide-ranging travels they made within the city to visit and experience the architecture – both traditional and contemporary – that the city had to offer. Duncan recalls coming over with a clear list of buildings to visit. These were mostly modern, but included in his words, "a couple of prewar ones which we were still quite interested in" and included Simpsons of Piccadilly (Joseph Emberton, 1936), the YMCA Indian Student Hostel (Ralph Tubbs, 1953), and the work of Tecton including Highpoint (1935-38), the penguin pool and other buildings at the London Zoo (1932-36).[466] Much of the work they sought out was contemporary with their time in London, much of it under construction as they visited. For many it was the modern schools that stood out as particularly good examples of British architecture. A sample of Edwin Whitaker's slides from his time in London reveal a high number of school buildings, many by his employer Denis Clarke Hall, and others from the county schools program.

Whitaker recounted some of these outings to his parents, describing a typical day traipsing across London, encountering all the architectural delights the city had to offer together with John White: "On Monday we did London exploring (what again!) and found a couple of jolly nice houses out near Hampstead Heath… On the way home we visited a housing estate – which was by far the best we have seen to date – it was at the back of Paddington in a pretty decrepid [sic] part of London but the whole area has been transformed into a wonderful sight. They have left all the trees

[463] See: "Official Announcements," *The AA Journal* 69, no. 782 (May 1954): 245.
[464] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 15 November 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[465] Peter Newnham, "Two Schools," *The AA Journal* 69, no. 777 (December 1953): 129.
[466] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.

possible so that the picture was improved by the greenish tinge of the trees which are now coming into leaf after the long winter of hibernation."[467]

Fig 3.20 Hallfield Estate, London. Tecton 1951-58. Photographer: Edwin Whitaker. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

[467] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 22 April 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker. It is not clear which houses in Hampstead they encountered, but certainly the housing estate was the Hallfield estate by Tecton with Drake and Lasdun.

Ross Chisholm's diary records the kind of places that were sought out by the graduates, his weekend entries are peppered with various building names, alongside walks through significant suburbs. They include the Festival Hall sites and the Battersea pleasure gardens, Churchill Gardens in Pimlico, the Church Street development by Gropius, Fry, Mendelsohn and Chermayeff, and a visit to the Roehampton development by the LCC while it was under construction.[468] John Lidbury's report further outlines the buildings of interest for the graduates, most of which would have been seen together with Chisholm at least.

> During the past eighteen months, the building industry, specially [sic] in and around London, has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. There is acres of bomb damage still left just as it was ten years ago after the rubble had been cleared away, but everywhere there is building activity going on… The emphasis is on housing and school. Huge blocks of flats of densities up to one hundred persons to the acre, are nearing completion at Pimlico done by Powell and Moya. Also nearing completion is a similar block done by the London County Council at Wimbledon. Harlow New Town, with contributions from Gibberd, Fry, Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardell [sic], and many others, is also well on the way to completion… There are showrooms of every type and description to be seen in the streets of London. Some, I think, are excellent and other just fair, but from them all, something can be learnt. To actually see this work, to feel and view it in three dimensions, to move around it and appreciate the use of colour and materials, gives one a background which cannot be obtained from magazines and books.[469]

Lidbury goes on to single out the older building stock that he encountered, which was an unexpected interest for a graduate trained in the modern manner: "Since arriving in England, I have found an increasing awareness of the old works. The gracious Georgian housing, overlooking delightful squares, the lovely mellow cathedrals and chapels like Kings College Chapel, Cambridge and St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The charming villages complete within themselves, wonderful old places full of character and warmth."[470]

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[468] Ross Chisholm personal diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm.
[469] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.
[470] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.

Outside of visiting buildings in the UK, there were also opportunities further afield to engage directly in the discourse and making of modern architecture culture. Simply being in London meant that the graduates found themselves able to take up opportunities that would otherwise not be available to them in Australia. In between jobs over the summer holidays, John Duncan signed up with the RIBA as a delegate for a party sent out to Warsaw for a planning congress, The European Conference on Housing.[471] Duncan spent just over a week in Warsaw, before travelling further south in Poland and through eastern Europe before returning home. Others got the chance to take part in major international exhibitions. In 1954, while Duncan was in Warsaw, John White headed to Milan for the summer to meet up with fellow PTC graduate and close friend Lex Hill, who was on his way from Perth to London, via Athens, Istanbul and Italy.[472] Together they intended to visit both the Milan Triennale and the Venice Art Biennale. White had arranged to meet up with Francesco Gnecchi-Ruscone whom he had met the year previously while travelling through Italy with Duncan and Leunig on their way to London.

Ruscone had been involved with the organization of the Milan Triennale in 1951 where he had staged a small exhibition on treatises concerned with proportions 'Mostra degli studi proporzione'.[473] He was a frequent collaborator and exhibitor with the Triennale, exhibiting again in 1960 with his 'Townscape in Milan' exhibition and would regularly review the shows for AR.[474] Ruscone was not directly involved with the 1954 show, but was still clearly closely linked, and it is likely through these links that he invited White and Hill to contribute to the Triennale. Through him, he arranged for the pair to assist in the construction of Buckminster Fuller's cardboard geodesic dome, the 'Cupola Geodetica' designed together with architect Robert Mango. While there, it is likely they would have met up with other key Triennale participants and former acquaintances like Ernesto Rogers, who White had previously met through Ruscone, who had designed the Children's Labyrinth.[475] The trip was not a discovery of modernism for the graduates,

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[471] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[472] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1954): 20.
[473] Anna Chiara Cimoli and Fulvio Irace, "Triennial 1951: post-War Reconstruction and 'Divine Proportion," Conference Paper presented at *Nexus 2012: Relationships between architecture and mathematics* (Milan, 11-14 June 2012): 4. Accessed 12 April, 2021, https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs00004-012-0132-6.pdf
[474] See: "Twelfth Milan Triennale," *The Architects' Journal* 132, no. 3410 (Aug 25 1960): 294.
[475] "Milan Triennale: The Maze," *The Architects' Journal* 120, no. 3109 (September 1954): 397.

but rather a forum through which they could experience buildings they had read about firsthand, hear talks and engage in debates and critically evaluate this world directly.

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Fig 3.21 Cupola Geodetica, X Triennale, Milan. Buckminster Fuller, 1954. John White and Lex Hill assisted on the construction. RIBA Collections.

3.3.7 Travelling Together

While seeking out every opportunity to engage with the architecture culture of London and to see a whole range of new building projects, it was the prospect of travel, both within the UK and through Europe which remained the priority. John Lidbury again provides a succinct directive in his report:

> One can live on what is earned, of course, but if you intend to see all that you possibly can in the time available, both in England and on the Continent, then you will need that amount of money. What is the point in coming away if, upon arrival, you cannot afford to move around at every opportunity… There is so much to see in this country and in this part of the world, and as time is so limited, every opportunity must be taken, and every weekend used to move around covering the multitude of things to be done and seen.[476]

John White put it in more direct terms. "That was the intention. The intention was to work during the winter and travel during the summer. Save enough money to go back to Europe or wherever."[477]

For most of those who travelled abroad, living in London was synonymous with an easy ability to travel. The capital provided ready access to a number of destinations both in the UK and abroad, and it was this ease of access which characterised the city experience as much as anything done within London. Travel was often done within the context and the company of their broader social group, and so it was a mix of architectural tourism and a more general interest in experiencing the breadth of global culture. Most trips were done with private transport that they had purchased, either cars, motorbikes, or scooters, but many others hitch-hiked. Having access to their own transport was seen as very desirable and it provided them with a sense of freedom and ease of travel which was crucial and most of the people I spoke to purchased some form of personal transport. This meant that trips to the continent could be taken last minute, and weekends were easily given over to day trips out from London. Some, like Lex Hill bought scooters in Italy and rode them over to use while in London, while others bought motorcycles. John White purchased a BSA and Edwin Whitaker an AJS motorbike, having upgraded from his decidedly slower first purchase –

[476] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.
[477] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.

a bicycle with a motor attached which took him 7 hours to drive from London to Bath.[478] Joan and Alan Shepherd shared a motorcycle they had nicknamed 'Halelujah – Here We come!',[479] Chisholm and Lidbury shared a Hillman Minx, while Morris and Margaret Fairbrother picked up a cheap Morris 8. Barbara Hill and her friends shared an Austin station wagon. This enabled them to travel often, easily, and cheaply around the continent searching out adventure and architecture that they wanted to see. A membership of the Youth Hostels Association of England and Wales provided cheap accommodation, but many simply camped along the hedgerows and fields as they went. A copy of Banister Fletcher was a constant companion.

Fig 3.22 Ross Chisholm and John Lidbury with their Hillman Minx on a trip to the continent. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm.

[478] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 8 June 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[479] "Here's One Way to See the World," *The Daily News* 21 September, 1954, 14.

Fig 3.23 Ray Leunig, Wendy Lynch and John Duncan travelling to Brighton. Photographer: Beth Duncan. Private Collection, Beth Duncan.

They travelled together – with their partners and friends – and so the discovery, encounter and seeking out of modern architecture became a shared experience. For longer trips across the continent there was usually a group of young Western Australians that went together, sharing the cost of the travel but also the enthusiasm for the journey. These journeys crucially saw a mixing of social groups, and the graduates were joined by partners and friends as they set off to explore the countryside. Beth Duncan recalled going on many of these trips. Beth Duncan (Blair) and John Duncan had started dating in Perth, and they both ended up in London at the same time, although separately. Blair had finished her arts degree at UWA, before travelling to the eastern states, spending time in Melbourne before she undertook further library studies at the National Library in Canberra. Upon her return Beth and her friend Wendy Lynch (later Macgibbon) travelled together

to London, with another woman Patricia, that they had met in Melbourne, arriving in early 1954. Moving to a house in Earl's Court together, they fell in with the growing West Australian contingent including the architects centered at 48 Hogarth Road, given Beth's relationship with John. During this time Blair worked as a typist for the Manchester Oil Refinery and later the International African Institute.[480] Together this group would go on a number of trips together. Beth and another friend from Perth, Judy McCubbing, had hitchhiked across France and Italy, before meeting up with Duncan on his way home from the Warsaw conference. Together, the three of them drove together through Holland, where they stayed with some of Judy's relatives, and then across to Germany in an old Vauxhall that Duncan had bought cheaply.[481] Beth and John, together with Ray Leunig later drove up to Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Duncan and Leunig, with Beth, Wendy Lynch (MacGibbon) and Patricia from Melbourne also drove down to Brighton to follow the London to Brighton veteran car run, which saw in the backseat of Duncan's new convertible Morris Minor.[482]

The women who traveled in groups were far more mobile than the architects. They often took temporary jobs as nannies, or clerical roles, and so could travel often and for longer. Barbara Hill undertook a number of these journeys with her friends, and their extensive travel plans would have likely been widely discussed and spurred on the others within their broader network to seek out similar adventures. She recalled: "Together with three other friends, we drove around the Continent, camping and staying at Youth Hostels for about two months. From Norway we sailed across to Newcastle, U.K and drive to the Edinburgh Festival."[483]

[480] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.
[481] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.
[482] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.
[483] Barbara Hill, letter to Andrew Murray, 13 January, 2020.

JOAN and Alan Shepherd, all packed up and off to see the continent on "Halleluiah," their motor-cycle.

Figure 3.24 Joan and Alan Shepherd on their motorbike, travelling the continent. *Daily News* 21 September, 1954, 14.

Fig 3.25 Stuart Coll and Ed Whitaker in the snow. Private Collection, Stuart Coll jnr.

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Fig 3.26 Stuart Coll, Ed Whitaker (far right) and others on a camping trip. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

3.3.8 Key Destinations

For those that were over on their working holidays between 1953 and 56, several places emerged as key destinations that were shared widely amongst those over there and students that followed in their wake. Primarily, it was the work of Le Corbusier which would remain a fascination with the majority of Perth students well into the 1960s, and students made regular pilgrimages out to see buildings like Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, La Tourette, the Unite d'Habitation, and Chandigarh. Scandinavia was a favourite destination and was visited by many graduates given the interest sparked by New Empiricism, and Italy remained an enduring favourite. Edwin Whitaker's slide collection reveals some of the more specific destinations sought out, including Rotterdam to see Van den Broek and Bakema's Lijnbaan Shopping Street, which was very popular amongst British planners at the time, and influential in the planning of British New Towns.[484] Whitaker also sought out Dudok's Hilversum town hall, along with visits to Ronchamp, the Unite d'Habitation in Marseille, and trips across to Rome.[485] John White's mother came to visit in his second year there and they travelled around Europe together, and later he hitch-hiked his way up to Denmark where he spent almost a month in Copenhagen.[486] John Hallam also visited Rotterdam, where he sought out the new high rise apartment towers and new urban planning development, of which made various studies.[487] Within the UK, graduates sought out New Towns like Harlow, and the Hunstanton school by the Smithsons which became an early favourite amongst students and the site of regular visits. Visiting while it was still under construction, Chisholm and Lidbury drove out together to see it, and in a report home Lidbury singled it out as a highlight of their trip, describing it as "a wonderful piece of work."[488] Whitaker, who rode out to it with John White, likewise described it as "really terrific" and "quite a revolutionary sort of thing with all the steelwork exposed and painted black with infilling panels of either glass or bricks".[489]

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[484] Alistair Kefford, "The Arndale Property Company and the Transformation of Urban Britain, 1950-2000," *Journal of British Studies* (11 April, 2022): 9. https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2022.54
[485] Edwin Whitaker Slide Collection. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[486] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[487] Taylor, "John Frampton Hallam."
[488] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.
[489] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 22 April 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

Fig 3.27 Unite d'Habitation, Marseille. Le Corbusier, 1952. Photographer: Edwin Whitaker. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

An article on the travels of Joan and Alan Shepherd in *The Daily News* provides one of the few contemporary published accounts of these journeys and it outlines the kind of extensive itineraries that were common amongst this group. It outlined their journeys across Europe on their motorcycle, where they camped everywhere they went:

> Their first trip took them through northern France, Belgium and Holland to Bremen, Hamburg and Keil, then to Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm, back to Hamburg, then to Hanover, Cologne and Heidelberg, across the mountains to the Moselle, to Luxemburg, Rheims and Paris. The second trip took them to Switzerland – Geneva, Basle, Berne, Lucerne – into Austria to Innsbruck, over the Brenner Pass to Italy – Venice, Florence and Rome – through the Italian and French Rivieras and on to Paris. Each time they left Paris until last. "We would

> never have had enough money left to the rest of the trip if we had stopped there first," laughed Joan.[490]

As the decade progressed, the nature of travel began to change. Trips became longer and itineraries began to be more individual and specialized. Bill Weedon recalled his highlights as visiting Durham Cathedral, crofters' cottages of the Outer Hebrides and the Rodovre Town Hall in Denmark designed by Arne Jacobsen, which he was allowed to visit while the offices were moving their furniture in, having only been completed just weeks before.[491] Gus Ferguson drove his Fiat as far as Greece on long weekends, and the Mediterranean became a place of increasing interest amongst young architects, particularly in the vernacular traditions of the area. There is also evidence of people travelling with other architects that they met through their offices, as they expanded their social networks. The defining example of this was a trip that was initiated by Gus and Clare Ferguson in 1959 as they prepared to return home.

Once Gus had finished up with Chamberlin Powell and Bon and was required to return back to Australia, he and Clare arranged to drive together home, across Europe and down to India. They had a Fiat 600, which they had been using in London, but when word of their trip spread through the office others took up the offer to join in. With additional passengers they upgraded to a Volkswagen minibus to accommodate the now 6 passengers from the CPB office. Alongside Gus and Clare was Eugene Mapp, their friend from Perth and best man at their wedding and who had accompanied them initially to Africa, along with Michael Neylan and Peter Deakins who were assistants in the office. They were also joined by Elizabeth Vercoe, an interior designer from Melbourne who had worked previously for Bates, Smart and McCutcheon. Together they embarked on a seven-month journey that saw them cross Europe and into Asia, through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India before they arrived in Sri Lanka. Neylan had left them part way through the trip, but the others five then sailed from Colombo to Fremantle aboard the Orontes, arriving on the 19th January 1960.[492] This trip would also facilitate the rarely seen reverse

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[490] "Here's One Way to See the World," *The Daily News* 21 September, 1954, 14.
[491] Bill Weedon, letter to Andrew Murray, 20 March 2021.
[492] Shipping records show that Ferguson, Ferguson, Mapp, Deakins and Vercoe all sailed to Australia together.

working holiday, where Deakins then stayed on in Melbourne for a time working for firms including Bogle and Banfield before returning home to London.[493]

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Fig 3.28 Edwin Whitaker and his motorbike, camping. Likely taken by Stuart Coll. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

[493] Peter Deakins, "Around the World and Back in London," website memoirs, accessed 23 September, 2021, http://www.deakins.co.uk/id25%20Peter%20Deakins-AroundtheWorld%20&%20Back%20in%20London.htm

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Fig 3.29 Youth Hostels Association membership card, Edwin Whitaker. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

3.3.9 Conclusion

The periods that these architects spent living and working in the UK were some of the most influential and profoundly transformative moments in their lives. The time spent within architects offices offered a range of experiences – alternatively stimulating, challenging, boring and financially reassuring – but it was equally the time spent away from the office that would provide long lasting, and transformative moments for these young architects and their wider social circle. As John Lidbury concluded his travel report:

> I would say that, if, even at the end of eighteen months I had not obtained any useful experience in an office (which is ridiculous anyway), even so, the fact that one is over here amongst this architecture, both old and new, amongst these people who live such a different way of life, makes any effort and sacrifice by young architects worth while.[494]

For those who travelled in the 1950s they were able to take advantage of a newfound autonomy made possible through the ability to travel affordably, all bolstered by the relaxation of postwar restrictions and societal expectations. The majority of those that went over during this period were in their early twenties, still living at home with their parents, and having gone straight from high school into the diploma course or university study. Amidst the backdrop of postwar London they formed important friendships, significant relationships and developed personally. They got married, had children, and travelled widely. These were experiences and bonds that would continue to develop and strengthen back home in Perth and would flow directly into the profession. This broader social group became clients, collaborators, and critics and would figure within the profession for decades to come. Outside of the personal relationships, many of the architects who travelled together would go on to form business partnerships, practices and collaborate on buildings and competitions. They would write, teach and design together, drawing on networks and relationships that were cemented in those years of shared lived experience in the UK, which will be examined in the following chapters.

This chapter has articulated the particular ways in which the working holiday played host to the combining of professional and personal lives that is rarely experienced in practice or described in the historiography. The period that these architects spent away from home, working and travelling

[494] Lidbury, "W.H. Robertson Memorial Travel Grant," 16.

across the world, was spent together in close quarters with other architects, friends and partners, where life and architecture overlapped in an inseparably complex and messy way that would inform their careers and architectural practice in the future. Away from the drafting table and the classroom, they spent months together in ships' cabins, hours in long car rides, train carriages, sleeping in tents, hostels, and sharing flats.

This chapter has made clear how important the idea of the group was to the success of the working holiday. This was not about individual travel or pursuits, but rather an experience carried out as part of an identifiable and contained cohort of likeminded people from the same broad social milieu. The identification of this shared aspect of the working holiday would become crucial as the graduates returned to Perth and commenced practice. This will be examined in detail in the following chapter, but here it lays bare how tied up the social and professional networks were, and how integral they were to the experience of the graduates and the formation of their world view. They didn't just go see modern buildings by themselves, they went together with their friends and partners and other professionals. They didn't just get jobs and establish contacts by themselves: they did so through their friends and partners. The experience had in London was one that saw them fully immersed in the postwar city. They mixed work, architecture culture and the offerings of a modern city into a singular experience, which saw the boundaries of work and play seemingly dissolved, and this would have a clear and considerable effect on the kind of work and practices they established when they returned. Together, they sought out freedom, risk, and a kind of rebellion triggered through a generational shift, which was available outside of Australia and the strictures of a small-town existence. As the next section will examine, it was this broader social group, and these modern ambitions, which would provide an active component for an emerging culture in Perth that began in the mid-1950s and which relied heavily on the bonds that were formed and the experiences they had together on their travels to the UK.

Chapter 4 Return to Perth

The next three chapters examines the influence that the working holiday had on the development of architecture culture in Western Australia once the travelers had returned home. Each chapter examines one outlet that this influence was channeled through: the opening of a coffee shop, the editing of *The Architect*, and the individual architectural practices that were established by the returning travelers. It was with these outlets, along with a swathe of others, that an identifiable and new Western Australian architecture culture began to coalesce, driven in large part by those architects who had spent time living and working together overseas. Once back on home soil, they were able to focus the energy and newfound enthusiasm for the profession they had experienced abroad in an effort to stimulate the local profession, and they looked for ways to engage beyond the confines of the office and built output. The decision to focus on these three distinct endeavours is an attempt to demonstrate the diversity and breadth of engagement in the profession by those returning architects. The three aspects chosen were significant cultural touchstones, and emerged as key aspects when conducting the oral histories. But their inclusion is also the product of available resources and archival records. More ephemeral efforts to affect the culture have necessarily disappeared, along with ones that might have slipped from the collective memory.

Chapter 4.1 The Shiralee Coffee House.

4.1.1 Introduction

> Our learned ex-students Lex Hill and Jack White have returned from their overseas sport basking in the belief that bachelorhood is for those who don't know any better. Lex, believing that Architecture definitely doesn't pay has put his wife to work earning "shekels" by serving coffee in Ean McDonald's old office. Jack must be congratulated on his recent engagement to Penny Hanrahan.[495]

This chapter looks at the opening of the Shiralee coffee house in 1956 which played a central role in the development of a new Western Australian architecture culture. The coffee shop was the initiative of newly-married Barbara and Lex Hill and they opened it shortly after they returned from their trip abroad. It was an effort to replicate in central Perth the atmosphere of the coffee houses of London which they had just experienced. While not started as an explicitly architectural project, the Shiralee was quickly co-opted by the local architectural community and became the social centre for a select group of the profession and the students of the nearby PTC. It offered a space outside the office and the classroom where ideas could be tested, networks established, and plans formulated and debated over a hot coffee. Centred on an account of the coffee shop which developed through extensive conversations with Barbara Hill, this chapter looks at the motivations behind the opening, and the role it played within the architectural community, particularly as the venue for a series of infamous architectural Christmas pantomimes.

The Shiralee has never been the subject of scholarly attention, and aside from references to it as the location of the well-known Christmas pantomimes, it has never been discussed or mentioned in any architectural or social history of Perth. In the period after this study, the early 1960s, the Shiralee was transformed into a legendary folk music venue and has since featured in a number of folk music and nightclub histories of Perth.[496] But in its original form as run by the Hills it remains unexamined, and has never been identified or untangled from its more well-known folk connections. The account presented here was produced through extensive conversations with the

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[495] "Architectural Students' Association," *The Architect* (March 1956): 31.

[496] See: David Hough, "Eating Places," in *The Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia,* eds. Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (Crawley: UWA Press, 2009), 297-299; Jon Stratton, "Youth Culture," in *The Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia,* eds. Jenny Gregory and Jan Gothard (Crawley: UWA Press, 2009), 963-965; Malcolm J. Turnbull, "The Folk Boom in Perth," *Town Crier: Newsletter of the Western Australian Folk Federation* 32, no. 5(2004),33, no. 2 (2005): n.p.

original owner Barbara Hill, along with former employees and clientele, and provides a telling of the Shiralee story for the first time. Given the nature of the shop - a small, word-of-mouth venue that was never advertised – there is little evidence of its existence left. I have never seen a photograph of the original space nor a menu or any other traces of the shop, either physical or in print. It was only through conducting a number of oral histories that I became aware of it, and its significance in the first place and so the story remains extremely fragmented.

4.1.2 Returning to Perth

Towards the end of 1954 the first members of the Student Association from the tight knit-group centred around SW5 began to return home. First was industrial designer David Foulkes-Taylor, followed by Alan and Joan Shepherd in September, and Edwin Whitaker in December. In 1955 more followed. John Hallam arrived home in March, Stuart Coll in April, Tony Ralph in May, John White and Lex Hill together in September, followed by John Lidbury, John Duncan and Ross Chisolm who sailed home together in January 1956. Having spent several years overseas gaining valuable work experience and touring around the continent, these young architects and designers returned to Perth full of ambition and enthusiasm. They were ready to immerse themselves within the local profession and to begin their careers in earnest. Arriving home in quick succession, there was the sense that this loose group of young travellers was suddenly 'emptied out' into Perth and its effect on the local profession was clearly felt. Here was a group of young professionals who had spent several intense years travelling and working together across Europe and the UK, brimming with enthusiasm, new cosmopolitan experiences, and a newly discovered urbanity and worldliness arriving home into a small city all at the same time. Keen to translate their recent experience and education into reality, all would go immediately into practice, relishing the opportunity to translate their experience into built form. Some would open their own small offices, some would go straight into senior positions within the PWD, while others were quickly made partners in established firms in town.[497] Alongside their practices, many adopted influential and highly visible roles within the profession, as teachers, committee members, writers, editors, and event organisers, through which they would initiate a series of new ventures, and transform existing

[497] Those returning architects that were quickly promoted within older, more established firms included: Ross Chisholm at Cameron, Chisholm and Nicol; John Lidbury at Hobbs Winning Leighton; John Duncan at Duncan, Stephen and Mercer.

institutions into cultural nodes, and through which the profession, or at least the most visible part of it, would gather.

The subjects of the following two chapters, The Shiralee and the editing of *The Architect* journal, were central to this ambition. Both these initiatives aligned with a distinct changing of the guard which was beginning to build and coalesce in the central city, as the older generation of architects who had controlled the profession for so long were beginning to fade from view. This was in large part focused on the Perth Technical College diploma course and its newly installed head, Francis Senior Bolland, who was notably more progressive and outspoken than the late H.W. Robertson,[498] and it was further bolstered by the return of the travellers en masse. This change was supported by a series of young, progressive firms which had started up in the city and were led by those first graduates of the PTC course who had opted not to travel abroad.[499]

4.1.3 Finding their Feet in Practice

> Jack "Pinhead" White, our motor-bike fiend, after having mastered the smog, snow, ice and slush, came off second best while attempting to take a short cut. Wrapped "ye old bike" around a boulder. However after minor repairs all was well. He and Lex Hill, who will leave his wife Dujois here in Australia, will travel via Greece, Turkey, Syria, Delhi, for the express purpose of visiting Le Corbusier's, Chandigah [sic], thence to Ceylon, and by boat to Australia."[500]

In May 1955 John White, Lex Hill and Barbara Hill rode home together from London, setting out from Barbara's flat in Redcliffe Road. John White rode on his BSA motorcycle, while Lex and Barbara shared a Vespa that Lex has bought previously in Venice. Barbara recalled the Vespa and its laden cargo: "It carried the two of us, plus tent, cooking gear, spare petrol tank, the usual clothes and of course a copy of the bulky Banister Fletcher, the architects' essential reference."[501] Along the way they were joined by Sydney architect William Burrows in Marseille, who had

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[498] Bolland was a British-born architect, trained in Manchester and was amongst the most influential and radical students in England in the 1940s. He founded the journal *PLAN* and was instrumental in establishing the unified Architectural Students Association in 1941. See *PLAN: Architectural Students Association Journal* 1 (1943).

[499] The first group of graduates from PTC to open their own small, independent offices included: Ean McDonald, Denis Silver, and John White. Others like Anthony Brand partnered up with the established Marshall Clifton, and they would form an identifiable new wave of architectural practices in the city.

[500] "Students' Notes," *The Architect* (June 1955): 29.

[501] Barbara Hill, letter to Andrew Murray, 13 January, 2020.

worked in London with Lex. The four rode overland through France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. They travelled across Italy to Brindisi, then across to Patras in Greece and down to Athens before they got on a ship to Beirut. Along the way they camped in the Baghdad cemetery, visited Basra and then sailed to Bombay. Burrows left them somewhere along the journey, and Barbara left in Bombay where she sailed back to Perth aboard the Stratheden, arriving on the 6th August. John and Lex continued on together, travelling across India on a mix of trains and their bikes, through Chandigarh, before sailing to Sri Lanka. They stayed in Colombo for a period with John White's aunt who lived there, before sailing home aboard the Himalaya and arriving in Perth on the 21st September.

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Fig 4.1 Barbara and Lex Hill and their scooter outside Barbara's flat in Redcliffe Road. Photographer David Moore. Courtesy of Lisa Moore.

Fig 4.2 Barbara Hill and the scooter that she and Lex rode home with John White. Private Collection, Barbara Hill.

The primary reason for their return then was the possibility of work for White. Perth architects in London kept in regular contact with those who had stayed behind and set up practice, and it was often the prospect of work and partnerships broadcast from back home that prompted the end of the working holidays.[502] Perth architect Eric Leach had written to John White, suggesting there was some potentially significant work coming up in his practice, and had asked John to join him in practice.[503] Leach had just ended his practice with his longtime partner Marshall Clifton, where White had worked for before he left for London, and the two had maintained a close relationship while White was overseas. White returned home for the job, but it soon became clear that the work was not going to eventuate, and so Leach dismantled the practice. By the beginning of 1957 Leach had moved to London to never return.[504] White then spent a few months working in the office of Ean McDonald and Associates which Ed Whitaker had recently joined,[505] before deciding in 1956 to go out on his own. He started his own practice based in Fremantle with a handful of mostly residential commissions. White employed a series of students to assist in the office, and

[502] Whitaker was in constant contact with PTC colleague Ean McDonald, and McDonald had offered Whitaker a position as Senior Assistant in his office when he returned. Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, March 8 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[503] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[504] "Notes – Eric Leach," *The Architect* (March 1957): 15.
[505] Ean McDonald, *90 Not Out* (Perth: Hesperian Press, 2009), 62.

soon PTC students Colin Moore, followed by Frank Sinicco, and Robin Kornweibel passed through the doors of his small office.[506] White, together with these students, quickly established himself as the head of a progressive, but small office and developed a good standing within the local profession within the first few years of his return.

Meanwhile Lex and Barbara Hill returned to Gooseberry Hill, a suburb in the Perth Hills, where they stayed with Lex's parents while they re-established themselves in Perth. Lex also found himself working alongside Whitaker and White in the office of Ean McDonald and Associates. Ean McDonald, Edwin Whitaker and Bill Jones were the only three students who had graduated from Perth Technical College in 1951, the second graduating cohort, and between them they had retained a strong bond.[507] Jones and McDonald were of an older generation, ten years Whitakers' senior, having served in the war before commencing their studies and so had remained in Perth to begin their careers, rather than travelling overseas with Whitaker. Ean McDonald had established his own practice shortly after graduation, and he was kept busy with a healthy number of mostly residential commissions. He was soon able to employ Jones and recent graduate Peter Grigg in the office.[508] Whitaker and McDonald remained in close contact throughout Whitaker's time away, both in South Africa and the UK, and McDonald was clearly angling for Whitaker to return and join him in practice as it was rapidly expanding. When Whitaker returned in late 1954, he joined MacDonald and both he and Hill were soon made partners. [509] This was followed by a brief foray into forming a group practice in 1956, styled as MacDonald, Grigg, Whitaker, and Hill for which the only known project is a design for a new town hall in Nungarin, before the group disbanded[510] and the practice was reformed as McDonald and Whitaker. At this point Grigg left to go out on his own, while Lex Hill joined the office of Hawkins and Sands.[511]

This quick sketch of White, Hill, and the McDonald and Whitaker upon their re-entry in the Perth profession is partly to demonstrate the small community of Perth that the travelling architects returned to, and the centrality of a figure like Ean McDonald who had stayed behind to develop his own practice. But it is also sets the scene for the Shiralee Coffee House, which would occupy the

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[506] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[507] McDonald, *90 Not Out,* 51.
[508] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, November 15, 1953. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.
[509] McDonald, *90 Not Out*, 76.
[510] "New Hall will meet varied needs," *The West Australian*, March 24, 1956, 14.
[511] McDonald and Whitaker continued until 1976 when Whitaker retired.

former offices of McDonald and Associates where White, Hill, Whitaker, Grigg and Jones had all worked. Shortly after graduation McDonald went out on his own and set himself up in an office space at 17 Howard Street in the middle of the CBD and at the heart of Perth's small legal district. McDonald recalled the office in his memoirs:

> I set out on my own in a tatty basement in Howard Street that had been for years a decrepit repository for somebody's junk. I moved in with a hose, first cutting a weep hole in the floor to dump the sludge and other deleterious matter… My helpers: family, mates, staff, and friendly students seeking great practical experience, moved in to clean up. The whole of the surfaces were scrubbed, scraped of the years of accumulated grime, then casually slapped all over with the cheapest paint, kalsomine. My offices were formed with light scrap timber frames covered with coloured hessian. This was the cheapest method but actually quite cute and elevating. My own office desk had been a discard from my mother's kitchen, my drafting tables were sheets of plywood on frames of scrap wood, but the essence was in the product not the trimmings.[512]

McDonald's office provided an easy transition back into practice for Hill and Whitaker and the firm was soon able to move beyond the standard residential fare typical of small Perth practices and expanded into commercial work.[513] Most commissions came from the WA mineral boom of the late 1950s, and the oil industry, which had expanded since the construction of Kwinana refinery just south of the city – an industry in which McDonald had a number of key contacts. As the office of McDonald and Whitaker grew, it moved into larger premises around the corner to Adelaide Terrace, which left the small Howard Street office vacant. Lex and Barbara then took over the lease and set about transforming the small square office space at 17 Howard street into their version of a London coffee shop with which they had become enamoured during their time abroad.

4.1.4 London Coffee Shops

In a note to me, Barbara described the straightforward motivation behind her and Lex's decision to open a coffee shop, despite the fact they had no experience in hospitality: "Back in Perth after

[512] McDonald, *90 Not Out*, 62.
[513] McDonald, *90 Not Out,* 61.

August 1955, remembering and missing the many coffee shops we'd enjoyed visiting in London and elsewhere, Lex and I, with his parents, were keen to start a coffee shop."[514] Perth at that time had no coffee shops like it, and Barbara and Lex simply wanted 'a good coffee shop' of their own.[515] The London Coffee shop that Barbara identified was a unique phenomenon and developed a specific and reproducible typology that would spread across the world, largely in major Commonwealth cities like Melbourne, Perth and Auckland.[516] An exploration of the typology and its history provides important context for the Shiralee, and the Hill's seemingly impulsive decision.

The London coffee shop, as a distinct and identifiable type, emerged in the early 1950s, amidst a postwar youth revolution which was unfolding across the city. The coffee shop followed in the wake of the invention of the modern espresso machine in Italy, patented by Gaggia in 1947, which used pressure rather than steam to extract the coffee. The invention of this machine and the new espresso making technique led to what coffee historian Markman Ellis described as a global 'espresso revolution' which would occur across the globe in a number of different guises and models, but perhaps the most influential was a specific type known as the London Coffee shop.[517]

The Gaggia espresso machine was introduced to London in 1953 through Milanese entrepreneur Pino Reservato, and it soon became a symbol for the enormous cultural change sweeping through London at this time.[518] This was a change that went far beyond the sophisticated and rich flavored coffee that the machines could produce. The machines inspired the creation of a new coffee shop typology, far removed from the coffee bars of Milan from which the espresso machines came. Rather than a place to taste the new style coffee, the London coffee shop became *the* place where the new British youth identity was forged. In reality it had little to do with actual coffee: it simply a provided a conduit for a social revolution to unfold. Markman Ellis has noted:

> The espresso-bar revolution had 'exploded like a bomb' in the mid 1950s. Importing an idea and some technology from Italy, it was transformed by London's particular forms of urban sociability, by jazz and skiffle, by teenage fashions and

[514] Barbara Hill, letter to Andrew Murray, 13 January, 2020.
[515] Barbara Hill, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 22 March, 2022.
[516] Examples include Il Capuccino (Melbourne 1954); El Cubana (Melbourne 1955); The Arab (Lorne 1956); and The Attic (Christchurch, 1957).
[517] Markman Ellis, *The Coffee-House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), 244.
[518] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 228.

> migrant expectations… the espresso bars were auguries of the new politics of later decades.[519]

With their outrageous interiors, late opening hours, and juke boxes they became the new social hubs for a new generation of newly emancipated British youth having seen off the end of wartime rationing, emboldened with a new sense of free time, money, and a growing appetite for socializing, culture and fun, and desperate for a social space they could identify as their own. By 1956, just three years after the first of the new wave espresso cafés was opened by Pino Riservato in his Soho basement, there was an estimated 475 coffee shops in London.[520] Ellis articulates their appeal: "There was little of the formality, ritual and expense of dining in restaurants; and unlike public houses and taverns, there were no licensing laws regulating the age of customers and hours of business…. Their clientele was young, fashionable and, most notably, comprised both sexes, men and women."[521] Martha Gellhorn further identified their attraction: "young people… can have company and warmth, from morning until midnight or later, at the minimum outlay of ninepence for a cup of foamy, milky coffee."[522] The coffee houses of London were thus entirely new spaces, free from historical associations and cultural baggage unlike other late night or traditional youth-oriented venues. This made them an entirely 'new social space' which allowed the meeting of 'a hitherto proscribed mixture of people' which was integral to their success.[523] The coffee shop type as it developed specifically in postwar London presented not only a novel interior, but also a new dining experience and way to socialise. These shops were open late at night, and typically were filled with low tables where patrons were encouraged to linger over a drink for several hours. The imperative to make a profit was obscured by their role as active social hubs. The London Coffee Shop was in part predicated on the romantic ideal of the bohemian prewar cafes of Continental Europe, where philosophical debates unfolded. They were places where serious discussions could take place, and where like-minded people could meet and share ideas long into the night.

The London coffee shop is remembered largely for its close connection to the emerging youth culture of Britain, acting almost as an incubator or backdrop for those things that would come to

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[519] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 244.
[520] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 228.
[521] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,*, 233
[522] Martha Gellhorn, "So Awful to be Young, or, Morning to Midnight in Espresso Bars," *Encounter* 6, no. 5(May 1956): 42-8, quoted in Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 228.
[523] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 245.

represent this generational shift like skiffle, trad jazz, and teddy boys.[524] But there was also another key aspect to the coffee shop, it was very much an instrument of the new cosmopolitan city. It spoke explicitly of a new engagement with the city, and of the freedom of the relaxed post war environment to go out, to see the theatre, watch a performance, and discuss over a cappuccino long into the night. The coffee shop was a specific urban phenomenon, and it was an entirely symbiotic relationship: their existence depended on, and subsequently recharged, London's 'particular forms of urban sociability'.[525] And it was particularly this aspect that appealed to the enormous number of Australians who arrived in London from the early 1950s. Most of the new coffee shops were to be found either in Soho or strung out west along into Kensington and Earl's Court. This meant that many of the key coffee houses were within walking distance of the Perth contingent based in SW5: El Cubano, Arabica, Sarabia and Las Vegas were all in Kensington, while a number of others were in Wigmore Street where many of the graduates worked.[526] Terence Conran's Orrery in Kings Road Chelsea was just around the corner from Barbara Hill's house in Redcliffe Road. While they were important as social hubs and signifiers of an emerging cosmopolitanism rising up from the rubble, they were also architecturally interesting and featured often in the pages of *AR* and *AJ*, with interiors that ranged from the wild and exotic, to those with sharp, minimal spaces and architecturally clean lines.[527]

While the precise interaction of the coffee shop and the graduates is not clear, there are some indications. Ross Chisholm records in his diary a visit to a particularly well-known example, the Mocamba in Knightsbridge, on at least one occasion. Designed by Douglas Fisher it came complete with bamboo lined walls, wicker stools and birdcage.[528] Chisholm's diary makes note of other coffee meetings with friends, and the Hills were clearly fans as articulated by Barbara. Given their large friendship group within London, and the popularity of the shops at the time, it can be safely assumed that others enjoyed them as well.

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[524] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 236.
[525] Ellis, *The Coffee-House,* 244.
[526] Stephen Gardiner, "Coffee Bars,"' *Architectural Review* 118, no. 705 (Sep 1, 1955): 167-173.
[527] A selection of articles include: Gardiner, "Coffee Bars,"; Marghanita Laski, "Espresso," *Architectural Review* 118, no. 705 (Sep 1, 1955): 165-167; "9d a Cup: A Report on Coffee Bars Illustrating the Greatest Social revolution since the Laundrette," *Architectural Design* 24, no. 6 (1954): 175-177.
[528] Gardiner, "Coffee Bars," 173.

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Fig 4.3 Mocamba Coffee bar, Knightsbridge, 1955. Photographer: Bill Toomey. RIBA collection.

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Fig 4.4 Moka Bar, Frith Street Soho. 1954. Photographer Kurt Hutton.

https://www.galerieprints.com/product/soho-cafe-bar/

4.1.5 Building a Coffee Shop

Beyond the simple desire articulated by the Hills to recreate the atmosphere of those coffee shops in Perth, clearly there was more behind the motivation. Perth's night life and social scene remained small. Restaurants were rare and old fashioned, and the only coffee houses were either pre-war tea rooms, or those that catered for the Italian migrant communities across the railway tracks in Northbridge.[529] The sole exception was the Van Gogh coffee house which opened in 1952 as a bohemian coffee shop run by arts students from the University.[530] The pub was still the dominant social space, and they were exactly the kind of environments to which those coffee shops in London were set up in opposition. In 1956 Perth was still a conservative city, and for a young person the contrast between it and London couldn't have been starker particularly in terms of nightlife. Public bars in central Perth were still predominantly male-only affairs or segregated into male and female spaces, a division keenly felt by Barbara. Shortly before she sailed for London, she recounted a time when she was denied entry to the Palace Dive Bar, located on St George's Terrace, which was then the architects' main after work drinking spot. Even though she had gone there to meet Lex, she was refused entry and instead was relegated to the ladies lounge upstairs with the other 'wives'.[531]

In response, Barbara and Lex, invigorated by their experience in the socially progressive atmosphere of the London coffee shops, decided to open their own. It was to be a space where their friends and associates, many of them recently returned traveled from abroad, could gather and engage in a cosmopolitanism that was then missing from Perth. Lex and Barbara, together with Lex's parents, Alfred and Kathleen Hill, went in together as partners and opened their own coffee shop, The Shiralee, named by Kathleen Hill after the recent novel of the same name by D'Arcy Niland. Neither Barbara, Lex, or his parents had any experience in hospitality or running a café. They were simply interested in the idea and with the enthusiasm of youth and the optimism of the postwar period. In this way the café further aligns with the London coffee shop scene which

[529] These were: The Pisconeri Coffee Bar (1954), Re Store, and Di Chiera Brothers. These were typically delicatessens which installed espresso machines, with espresso intended to be drunk standing up at the bar, rather than the dedicated sit down café environment of the Shiralee.
[530] "Students' Ambitious venture," *Western Mail* February 11, 1954, 19. A crucial difference was that the Van Gogh did not offer espresso.
[531] Barbara Hill, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 22 March, 2022.

was dominated by 'amateurs.'[532] Matthew Partington, the authority on the London coffee house scene of the 1950s notes that this was due to a series of factors but predominantly the low inflation rates, and the downward economy, which meant that rental prices on commercial properties were low enough "to allow someone with very little capital to rent or lease business premises – it was a chance worth taking."[533] Another commentator of the day, Martha Gellhorn, notes the charm and benefits of these enterprises: "No previous experience or training is necessary, and little capital… The interior decoration can just as well be home-made as not, if funds are low…Amateurism in fact pays, perhaps by setting the desirable tone of intimate harum-scarumry."[534] A similar economic situation faced the Hills, and so they were able to take the risk.

The four of them set to work transforming Ean McDonald's square basement office into 'Perth's most intimate coffee house' as it would be described on their menus. Lex and Barbara were well connected in the local art and architecture scene and called upon many of their friends to help out in constructing the interior. Given the central location in Perth, it was in close proximity to the Technical School and the majority of city architectural practices, many of their friends were able to drop by and lend a hand where they could. Bill Weedon recalls his casual involvement with helping set up the shop shortly before he sailed to London: "Lex was a good friend… and I was more or less at a loose end, waiting to get a call for a shipboard job to England, I had time on my hands… and it was something to do and to enjoy. I didn't do much, cleaning the place up and building a little kitchen… Much of my time was spent trying to do some cupboard work out in the back area."[535]

Bill and his partner Judy Holmes, and the artist Robert Juniper all lent a hand, and other friends like Bob Stafford and John White pitched in where they could. Together Lex and Barbara built all the tables, out of plywood tops and hairpin bent steel legs. Barbara made curtains for the space and sewed red and white checked table cloths. A small kitchen was installed with a sink, electric frypan, soup pot and vertical sandwich toaster. A bench was built along one side with small stools, and scattered pot plants and paintings by their friends enlivened the space. Bright yellow menu were printed and scattered across the tables and stuck up on the walls which added a touch of

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[532] Matthew Partington, "The London Coffee Bar of the 1950s – Teenage Occupation of an Amateur Space?" Paper presented at *Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space (Interior Architecture Conference)* July 2-3, 2009, University of Brighton, 4.
[533] Partington, "The London Coffee Bar of the 1950s," 4.
[534] Martha Gellhorn, "So Awful to Be Young, or, Morning to Midnight in Espresso Bars," *Encounter* 6, no. 5(1956): 43, quoted in: Partington, "The London Coffee Bar of the 1950s," 4.
[535] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.

colour to the space. While the fit out was done on the cheap, it was done with the assured eye and confidence of the owners. The hero of the space was of course the espresso machine, which Barbara bought from a local department store for 25 pounds. A shiny chrome, single group, lever machine sat atop the counter space - the gleaming symbol of the new wave coffee house.[536]

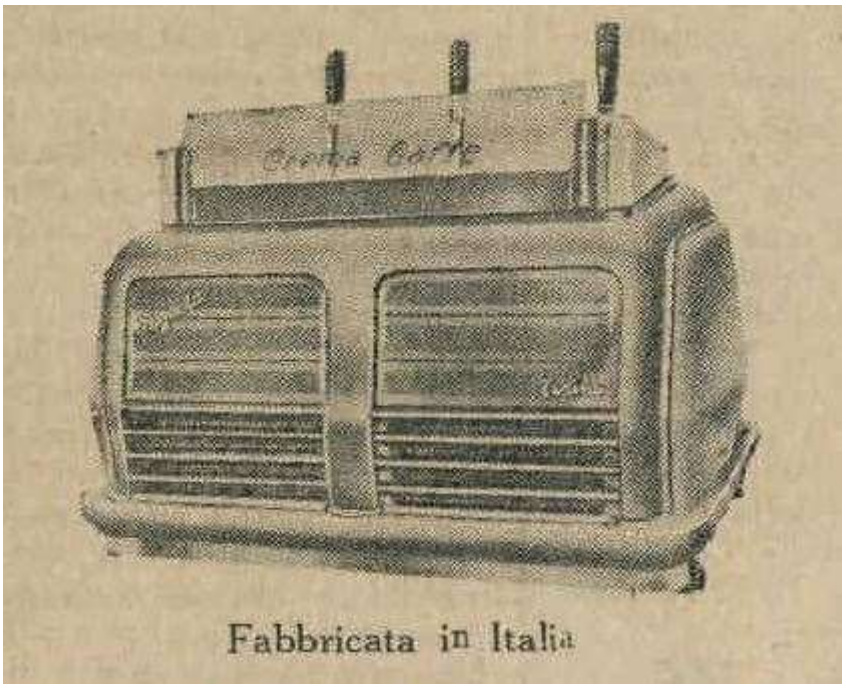

Fig 4.5 Advertisement for the Augusta espresso machine for sale in Perth at the department store Musgrove's where the Hill's purchased their machine. *Il Canguro* 23 March 1956, 6.

The Shiralee opened on Valentine's Day 1956, and drew in a crowd of their friends, including local architects, artists, and young people enthused by the cosmopolitan change unfolding in the city. Many were recently returned travelers from London. The opening invitation described it as "Perth's most intimate coffee house' "and with its small underground space, and no street signage or advertising, it earned its intimate moniker.[537] Open from 9am until midnight every day, except Sunday when it was closed for private functions, the Shiralee offered a space to meet during the

[536] This was most likely a 'Universal model' given that they were sold through David Jones in the eastern states, but by 1956 many other models were available, including Augusta through department store Musgrove's, and both Gaggia and La Cimbali had local distributors.
[537] Barbara Hill, letter to Andrew Murray, 13 January, 2020.

day, and socialize at night, an inclusive space away from the male-dominated and uncomfortable pubs around the city. The main attraction of the Shiralee was of course coffee, and alongside espresso, they also served Viennese, Arabic with rose water, and percolated. There was a modest kitchen space out the back in which they made toasted sandwiches, soup (always with cream), pikelets and Peter's ice cream. The Hills enlisted the help of friends to run the coffee shop during the week, overseen by the senior Hills. In the first few years their friends, which included influential and high profile members of the new cultural scene including Paddy Parry, wife of Mervyn Parry, Penelope Hanrahan, ballet dancer and wife of John White, along with Jacquie Sprogoe, who was the secretary for architects Hobbs, Winning and Leighton who worked there in her lunchbreaks to earn extra money to save up for her own London trip.[538] The staff added significantly to the appeal and community atmosphere that was generated, and it is clear that a scene began to develop with and around it anchored by the staff and frequent patrons.

4.1.6 Clientele

The Shiralee operated deliberately under the radar for the first few years of its existence. For a long time there was no signage on the street, and given that it was down in a basement with no street frontage, people frequently got lost trying to find it.[539] The coffee shop never advertised or received press, and so it was only known through word of mouth. It became popular during the day for office workers in the immediate vicinity, particularly the lawyers from Parker and Parker next door who frequented it for lunches. Within a few years of its opening, the Shiralee became known amongst a small but dedicated group of young people, in the manner of the London coffee houses, as a good date place and a sophisticated venue to meet late after a movie in the city over a cappuccino and a slice of exotic baked cheesecake: the height of sophistication in Perth.[540]

The Shiralee also attracted a regular stream of actors and musicians who came in through the back door from the Capitol Theatre, one of the cities grandest theatres, given that the theatre's back doors opened directly on to a small laneway at the rear of the shop. This meant that musicians performing at the Capitol would regularly duck in after performances, sometimes playing a small show to the coffee shop crowd. But predominantly it attracted those young people that were

[538] Jacquie Sprogoe, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 13 March, 2020.
[539] Barbara Hill, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 14 June, 2021.
[540] Gavan Bromilow, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 2 December, 2019; Gavan Bromilow, *The Memoir of a Very Naughty Boy* (Halls Head: Gavan Bromilow, 2014), 96.

involved with the expanding art and cultural scene that was appearing in Perth, and largely within the broader social orbit of the Hill's. With its hidden profile it meant they, and their friends could have a distinct sense of ownership over the space. The Shiralee opened at a time when a huge number of people within their broader circle had just returned from London and abroad, and this low-key coffee house provided an outlet that captured that same feeling back home. Beth Duncan recalled: "The Shiralee was a meeting place. For us it was quite exciting to have a coffee shop in Perth. Up until then there had been virtually nothing like that… The Hill parents ran it, and it was a money making concern, Mrs Hill in particular was a lovely person, she would always welcome us."[541]

Barbara described it to me as a place with a friendly and intimate atmosphere. It didn't make any money, but it encouraged people to linger over a coffee, to talk and to socialize. She described it as "friendly and inefficient", operating purely by word of mouth to service their wider network of friends, which included those in the arts community, the young architectural community and those in the immediate vicinity.[542] It was small, quiet and familiar, a kind of refuge within the city, that transcended Perth's pervasive conservatism.

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Fig 4.6 Corner of Howard Street and St Georges Terrace, c 1960. State Library of Western Australia 3881B/37.

[541] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.
[542] Barbara Hill, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 14 June, 2021.

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Fig 4.7 17-19 Howard St, Perth, 1976. The Shiralee was located through the last arch on the left hand side. Photographer: Fritz Kos. SLWA. BA 1595/A 184-2.

4.1.7 The Architects' Coffee Shop

In its first few years, The Shiralee maintained a special relationship with the local architectural community. Driven by the fact that Lex was by then a visible and well-known presence in the profession, it soon became one of the main places, outside of pubs and hotel bars – for a younger generation of architects to meet and discuss. Its proximity to Perth Technical College meant it quickly became a student favourite. Although the Student Association continued to hold their formal meetings elsewhere, it became the informal meeting place for Association members, hosting regular parties after student events.[543] The student notes section of *The Architect* from this period reveals this close relationship, and mentions of it are dotted throughout the issues.

> It is most gratifying to find that a discussion group has developed among the First Year Students. Symposia are held regularly at the Shiralee, and here questions of religion, art, philosophy, etc., are discussed.[544]
>
> The annual cricket match between the staff and students was held at King's Park Oval on the first of this month…As the game progressed it was obvious that age and experience (??) were no match for youth, but, however, the situation was reversed when the party retired to the Shiralee for the evening. Those who were fortunate enough to attend may well remember the successful, and perhaps not so successful skits produced by both staff and students… Thanks to Lex Hill for the use of the Shiralee, without which the evening would not have been the success that it was.[545]
>
> The meeting ended at 2255 hours with a mad scramble in the direction of the 'Shiralee' coffee lounge… The masses, having settled down within intimate surroundings, were served with tasty sandwiches, cakes, ice cream and hot coffee.[546]

The Shiralee quickly became part of the new lived geography for Perth architecture students, and those from a select group of progressive offices nearby, most notably those from Hawkins and Sands, where Lex worked. The Shiralee was not a place where established, older architects went.

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[543] "Students' Association Notes," *The Architect* (December 1957): 43.
[544] "Students' Notes: From the School of Architecture," *The Architect* (September 1957): 41.
[545] "Students' Association Notes," *The Architect* (December 1957): 43.
[546] "Architectural Students' Association" *The Architect* (March 1956): 31.

Instead it was closely aligned with a new, emergent, and progressive group of younger Perth architects which the Shiralee would play a key part in developing. Colin Moore, who was then a young student working for John White recalled that it was a particular, well-connected crowd that embraced it: "Yes, there would be parties and just coffee, and it was a bit of a meeting place for – well, I would have been one of the younger students who went there. And there was this older group, Lex Hill, John White, Peter Parkinson, that group. So they would be there… There would have been those who completely missed that connection."[547]

Moore's classmate, Ralph Drexel recalled meeting his wife Heather there as a student,[548] and Duncan Richards relayed his visits there to me:

> Yes, I went to The Shiralee frequently. It was a good place to meet architectural students, friends, etc. I met Oline [Hall, later his wife] at The Shiralee on occasion… The main reason I went to The Shiralee was to be left alone and to read. It was a benefit that The Adult Education Library was close by.[549]

The architectural connection of The Shiralee would be forever cemented however through a series of four Christmas pantomimes that were staged there each year from 1957 to 1960. Organised by Peter Parkinson and Lex Hill, they transformed the coffee shop for a week each year into 'The Shiralee Playhouse'.

4.1.8 The Christmas Pantomimes

The Student Association was known for putting on casual revues and performing satirical skits at various parties, functions and the Tee Square Balls.[550] These events were also performed at various gatherings and parties at The Shiralee, together with the staff of Hawkins and Sands, who retained close ties with the Association.[551] Out of these casual productions grew the idea of staging a yearly Christmas pantomime to be performed by the local architectural community. The pantomimes were the initiative of Peter Parkinson and Lex Hill, who both worked at Hawkins and Sands. Parkinson was a British-born architect, who had trained at the AA before emigrating to

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[547] Colin Moore, Interview with Andrew Murray, 9 February, 2019, Shenton Park, W.A.
[548] Neil Cownie, unpublished interview with Ralph Drexel, 2021.
[549] Duncan Richards, email correspondence with Andrew Murray, November 25, 2019.
[550] The architectural revue has a long- and well-established tradition both in Australia and abroad, likely stemming from the traditional university student revues.
[551] Desmond Sands was the head of Hawkins and Sands, and a former Association member, and continued a close relationship with the group well into the 1950s.

Australia in 1952. He was theatrically minded, having performed in the pantomimes at the AA, and became quickly immersed in the Perth theatre world, designing sets, often with Judy Holmes, along with performing in and staging various productions.[552] Peter Parkinson and Lex Hill under the newly coined monikers created especially for the productions, Sir Benjamin Buzzard and Sir Henry Striving, produced the performances, while Parkinson directed and wrote the shows, with help from Bob Stafford, another architect from Hawkins and Sands.[553] Each December, the Shiralee Coffee House was transformed into the Shiralee Playhouse for the week, complete with stage, box office and orchestra pit. It was already a very small space, but together Lex, Peter and a host of friends set about transforming this space into a working theatrical space. Parkinson designed a fully demountable Victorian style proscenium arch stage, made out of steel Uni-Strut sections and new 'Stramit' sheeting onto which he painted a decorative ensemble complete with trompe l'oeil classical columns and friezes, niches with sculptures, gas lamps and bas relief panels in shades of green and yellow with crimson curtains behind.[554] There was a small 'pit' on either side of the stage at the front of the room which allowed for a one-person orchestra to score the event. The orchestra was usually just Patricia Garrity (later Chapple), credited as 'Madame Patrice Garratorio', who was then Desmond Sands' secretary at Hawkins and Sands.[555]

The small room would seat 40 people, and the stage held 6 people 'uncomfortably'.[556] John Vernes, a draftsman from Hawkins and Sands was the doorman for the events, made to dress up in top hat and a morning suit, while Lex and Barbara Hill ran the 'refreshment' stand on the night. The constructed set made out of 'stramit and string' was offset by donated materials from major building companies in Perth like Stramit, Taubmans Paint, and Brisbane and Wunderlich, all of whom had senior partners in attendance at the shows. Local architects were roped in as actors, with John White, Ean McDonald and John Duncan as frequent cast members, alongside professional actors like Eileen Colocott, artist Romola Clifton and her sister Angela Clifton, both daughters of architect Marshall Clifton.

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[552] Kelly, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture,* 7-8.
[553] Kelly, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture,* 8.
[554] The original drawings for the theatre were not able to be located, presumed lost, but a copy remains on the cover of: Kelly, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture.*
[555] Cast details for the productions can be found in the Peter Parkinson Manuscript Collection, State Library of Western Australia, 8296A/Box 9.
[556] Kelly, *Peter Parkinson: Theatre Architecture,* 8.

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Fig 4.8 Poster for the Christmas Pantomime at the Shiralee Playhouse. Peter Parkinson Manuscript Collection, State Library of Western Australia, 8296A/Box 9.

Thus for a week each year from 1957 to 1960, the small basement space of the Shiralee was transformed into a miniature Victorian theatre and it attracted a wide cross section of the Perth cultural scene. Unlike typical architectural revues, these pantomimes were well attended by the general public, and drew in a diverse cultural crowd. A seating plan held in Peter Parkinson's archive reveals the variety of people that attended the productions. On one night of the production there was: Paddy Clare, the head of the PWD, Eric Sier, secretary of the RAIA, Desmond Sands, former RAIA president Edgar Le Blond Henderson, architects Eric Moyle and John Pidgeon, Frank and Joan Baden Powell - Frank was then the artistic director of the National Theatre Company at the Playhouse and later of Dirty Dick's Theatre Restaurant fame - and Ferdinand 'Ferry' Korwill, an engineer and president of the Art Gallery Society. Other notable guests included Claude de Bernales, the Western Australian mining entrepreneur known for building London Court in the 1930s and the leaseholder of the Wiluna mine in Kalgoorlie.[557] Seats were all 5/- and the proceeds went to the Architects' Benevolent Fund. For each production Parkinson would print out theatre handbills in the manner of classic Victorian handbills, listing the production crew, actors, and other superfluous details all set out in a playbill style font in a running list down a long, thin paper poster, completing the immersive experience and slavish attention to detail of which Parkinson was so fond.

[557] Peter Parkinson Manuscript collection, State Library of Western Australia, 8296A/Box 9.

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Fig 4.9 Seating plan for the Shiralee Playhouse. Peter Parkinson Manuscript Collection, State Library of Western Australia, 8296A/Box 9.

The first production was entitled 'Cat Dittington and His Wit, or Kit Dattington and his What: A moral tale (or pantomime) all wrote in rather shaky rhyme', and was 'created, dressed, undressed, recreated and produced in its entirety' By Sir Benjamin Buzzard and written by A.N. Other, another of Parkinson's nom de plumes. It set out to lampoon the building material Stramit and the cast of characters included 'Fairy Curtain Wall', 'Demon Plasterboard' and 'A struggling brutalist cat' played by John White. There were also five dear little elves named Longspan, Shortspan, Clearspan, Wallspan and Fenestra. The pantomime's plot revolved around a businessman attempting to sell a new breakfast food – Stramit - which was proving to be inedible.[558]

Parkinson and friends followed this up with three more equally absurd productions – 'Aladdin and his wonderful lamp or if the cap fits, wear it', 'Robinson Crusoe or The Rottnest Monster' and finally 'Peter Pan or the Boy who wouldn't throw up'. Katharine Brisbane, then chief theatre critic at the Western Australian and cousin of Helen Whitaker, Ed Whitaker's wife, and would later become Australia's most high profile theatre critic and champion, described the productions as "a delight to all those who squeezed into the pocket-handkerchief auditorium…[with a] fast and witty script, traditional airs, a ration of pungent topical comments, a first-rate Dame and a cast having the time of their lives"[559] All four productions were pointed architectural critiques – drawing on the major issues of the discipline and satirizing the leading characters of the profession with thinly veiled character names - The journalist Frank Platell was Frank Platitude, architect John Fitzhardinge was Jasper Fitzbuildinge.

It was through events like the Christmas pantomime which provides evidence of the kind of cultural nucleus that the Shiralee had become for the Perth architectural scene, and particular strands of the wider culture community. Drawing together architects, artists, and actors, it became a social hub and created a focus around which a community could develop, with architectural critique at its centre. While the Shiralee meant different things for different people, for the architectural community of Perth it provided a focal point through which those returned travelers, and those invested in the making of a local architecture culture, could gather.

4.1.9 The Shiralee as a Memory of London

[558] Script and handbill for the productions, Peter Parkinson Manuscript Collection, State Library of Western Australia, 8296A/Box 9.
[559] Katharine Brisbane, "Festive Fun at the Shiralee," *The West Australian,* December 25, 1959, 14.

The modern coffee shop, alongside its close relatives the tea shop and milk bar, has been portrayed within historiography as a key site for the development of modern architecture in Australia.[560] However, this scholarly focus has largely portrayed the coffee shop as an exemplar of modern design rather than potential sites of discourse. Key projects like the Legend espresso bar, The Teahouse, both designed by Clement Meadmore, and the Capri Espresso Lounge designed by Ernest Fooks – all in Melbourne - have been rightly celebrated as a key works of modern design and beacons of modernity in the postwar city. Their function as a meeting place has yet to figure in these studies. The Shiralee offers another side to the modern coffee shop: it was not architecturally significant for its striking interior design, but rather as a meeting place and social hub for the Perth architectural profession.

"This image/material has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons"

Fig 4.10 The Legend Café Melbourne, 1955, designed by Clement Meadmore. https://art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/exhibitions/clement-meadmore-the-art-of-mid-century-design/

[560] See: Nanette Carter, "Milk Bar Moderne," in *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia*, Ann Stephen, Philip Goad, Andrew McNamara eds. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 120-12; Michael Bogle "Architecture, Coffee and Cocktails," in *Leisure Space: The Transformation of Sydney 1945-1970*, Paul Hogben and Judith O'Callaghan eds. (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2014); 108-127.

In this sense, The Shiralee aligns with a cultural studies appreciation of the coffee shop, where these shops have long been portrayed as key sites within cities for the production of discourse, facilitating intellectual meetings and events and acting as conduits through which new networks and social groups can be forged. Historian Nick Beech equates them to a kind of 'social condenser' which he describes as: "A critical spatial practice immanent to social transformation... represent[ing] experiences 'in solution' rather than in 'precipitate', not 'means' towards specific 'ends' but lived moments."[561] Beyond the archetypal bohemian cafes of continental Europe like *Les Deux Magots*, cast into mythology and now popular tourist destinations, a host of ordinary coffee shops have provided a comfortable and lively atmosphere for people to meet and discuss ideas 'in solution' over a hot drink. Some, like the Partisan Coffee House in London were established precisely to encourage intellectual discussion, while others like the Old Vienna Coffee Inn in Brisbane were simply convenient locations, that provided neutral grounds and cheap refreshments for meetings. The Partisan Coffee House in Carlisle Street, Soho, was established in 1959 by Raphael Samuel ostensibly as a club room for the emerging political group, the British New Left, one that would provide not only space to host meetings and events but also generate a stream of revenue for the Universities and Left Review journal.[562] It was an 'anti' coffee shop, designed not for profit but for talk. By contrast the Old Vienna Coffee Inn, located in the Brisbane Arcade in central Brisbane and established in 1951, was an existing restaurant that was frequented by members of the Brisbane landscape architecture community, and has since become legendary as the place where Karl Langer, Arne Fink, Barbara van den Broek and Bernie Ryan met and first put forward the idea of the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects.[563] In this way, the Old Vienna, which would be otherwise remembered, if at all, for its romantic décor, cheap food and "continental waitresses"[564] has become imbued with a mythologized status, tied up with the nascent history of the landscape architecture profession of Australia. Recently The Last Laugh Theatre Restaurant in Collingwood has been immortalized for its hosting of an infamous architectural dinner and debate, through the scholarship of Kirsten Day and Peter Raisbeck.[565] All

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[561] Nick Beech, "Social Condensation in the Metropole: Locating the First New Left," *The Journal of Architecture* 22, no. 3 (2017): 506.
[562] Beech, "Social Condensation in the Metropole," 495.
[563] Andrew Saniga and Andrew Wilson, "A League of His Own: Karl Langer's Landscape Australia," in *Karl Langer: Modern Architect and Migrant in the Australian Tropics.* Eds. Deborah van der Plaat and John Macarthur (London: Bloomsbury Visual arts, 2022), 251.
[564] "Buy Lines: Talking Shop with Robin Ann Corbett," *Brisbane Telegraph*, November 27, 1952, 36.
[565] Kirsten Day and Peter Raisbeck, "The Last Laugh and its Afterlife: Emerging narratives in 1970s Melbourne Architecture," *Fabrications* 31, no. 3 (2021): 336-356.

manner of everyday restaurants, coffee shops, and bars have been tied up in important discursive formations, and they remain littered throughout historical accounts as physical anchors to otherwise ephemeral conversations and chance encounters, which would shift a discourse and shape various movements.

However, what makes the Shiralee so interesting is that it was specifically set up to foster this environment. Not in the direct, manifesto type ambition of The Partisan, but rather in its studied application of a type, providing an almost club house like atmosphere for an emerging cultural group. It was specific in its ambition. Drawing on their recent experience in London – it had the precise aim of creating a space within their home city that was familiar, comfortable, progressive and sociable, and responded directly to the renewed aspirations and ambitions of their wider social group, fresh from the intensity of London and living together within the dense network of Australians centred around SW5. The Hills wanted to create a place outside of the male dominated, high turnover and impersonal venues that otherwise characterized the city, having seen what 'another' night life culture could be.

Having learned from their London experience, The Shiralee provided a space where networks, both personal and professional were made visible, and where new ones could be formed. For the architectural community, it was a sociable space that acted as an extension of the office or the classroom. It was a space where people like draftsman John Vernes or secretary Patricia Garrity, who would be traditionally left out of these conversations, could become closely involved with the city's architecture culture and actively participate in its making. It provided a space where an architectural pantomime could be performed to a broader public audience, which positioned architecture as a major part of the cultural discussion in Perth at that time. The provision of a casual space, one over which a community could feel some degree of ownership, would prove to be an enormous benefit.

The Shiralee was in many senses a regular coffee shop, financially supported through lunchtime office trade and catering to a newly modern and young crowd who stayed out late in the city. But through their deliberate invocation of the London coffee house type, the Hill's created a space which played a pivotal role in an emerging architecture culture of Western Australia in the late 1950s. It provided a venue and means to gather and congregate in a manner perhaps otherwise unlikely, allowing ideas to emerge which otherwise might not have been allowed to precipitate. It

provided a space for discussion, quiet reflection, and the staging of pantomimes, so silly they might not have otherwise been performed.

It is not just in its recreation or transplanting of a contemporary British type in Australia that is significant about the opening of The Shiralee. Rather it is the recognition of the particular social environment that these coffee shops created, which the Hills longed for upon their return. Its creation was underscored by a kind of naivety and enthusiasm for the city, otherwise impossible to attain in Perth at that time. The coffee shop became a physical manifestation of the overlapping personal and professional networks which they had traversed while living together in London, condensed into a small space centred around a shiny espresso machine and the hospitality of the Hills. It didn't need to look like a London coffee shop or sell the same food. It was in the atmosphere, and its sheer existence that would provide so pivotal in its success.

4.1.10 Conclusion

A few years after opening the Shiralee, Lex and Barbara moved to Kuching, Sarawak for three years, where Lex had taken a role as architect within the British Colonial Service. The senior Hills, Alfred and Kathleen, continued to run the coffee house but in 1959 they sold it to Janet Robinson, after which it quickly changed hands again and it was brought by a group and run by Roslyn Seale.[566] Seale transformed The Shiralee into one of Perth's leading folk venues, and this is how it is widely remembered outside the architectural community.[567] After the Hills sold the Shiralee, the pantomimes only ran for another year, and the architectural students moved on to different venues including the Rep and Graham's Coffee Lounge which opened across from PTC, but none had the same kind of connection that the Shiralee offered.[568]

For the four years that the Hills ran it, and particularly in the first two where Barbara and Lex were closely involved, The Shiralee provided a slice of the cosmopolitan lifestyle that those returned travelers gravitated towards, fostering an active and robust social scene around it. It joined a small group of new art galleries like the Skinner and the Triangle, late night restaurants like the Latin Quarter in Northbridge and the Roma in Fremantle, and a thriving theatre scene, that marked a

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[566] Seale would go on to run a number of important Perth restaurants and venues, including the Tum Tum Tree, Bullseye Steakhouse, and Matilda's, most of which had interiors designed by John White.
[567] See: Hough, "Eating Places," 297-299; Stratton, "Youth Culture," 963-965; Turnbull, "The Folk Boom in Perth."
[568] Don Newman, "Introduction," in *1960 Before and Beyond: Architectural Students at Perth Technical College,* ed. K.A. Adam (Mount Claremont: D.G. Newman, 2020), v.

clear, albeit small, transformation that was occurring in Perth. Together, they catered for a new generation of people seeking to act out a kind of modern urbanity and cosmopolitanism, often led by those who had returned from living abroad in London. Initiatives like the Shiralee provided some respite and a connection with a modern cosmopolitanism so sorely missed in Perth.

The time spent living and working overseas provided an impetus for the graduates to re-engage with their home city, both intellectually and practically. The working holiday affected each traveler differently - for some, it was an awakening of a new world and a new way to do things. It was a trip full of inspiration and creative awakening, enabling direct access to new and exciting architectural projects and approaches. For others, it provided a critical distance from home and their community, in which they could reflect upon the conditions which made Perth and Australia distinct and to mediate on what might be missing. Either way, the return of this group of architects and their broader social circle between 1954 and 1956 provided an injection of enthusiasm and critical reflection which would have a noticeable and outsized impact on modern Perth. The Shiralee came about through the careful consideration and reflection of Barbara and Lex while abroad, identifying a gap which their experience in London provided them with the tools to fill. Whilst not an explicit architectural project, it was what Jessica Kelly has described as an architectural 'site of production': a place where "overlaps between professional and personal interactions' occur, and a site which provides an insight into 'the complex relationships and interactions that occurred in the background of architectural and design culture."[569] Investigation into the Shiralee has revealed the extent to which architecture in Perth intersected with a broader group of people, all seeking a form of modernity within the city's confines, and the significant influence that having a place with which a community can identify with, had on the production of culture.

[569] Kelly, "Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture," 7.

Chapter 4.2 Editing *The Architect*

4.2.1 Introduction

Just months after they had settled back in Perth, John White, Lex Hill, and John Duncan took over the editorship of *The Architect*, and together they edited the journal for two years and produced nine issues. As the official journal of the Institute, the role provided them with unparalleled access to their professional peers, giving them a platform and a voice through which they could broadcast their hopes and ambitions for the profession. Given their other commitments, both in practice and running the Shiralee, adding the extra effort to running the journal gives an insight into the enthusiasm and passion they had for the industry upon their return. It also demonstrates their belief in the potential for a journal to foster a community and advocate change. Given the rapid transition from travelling to editorial role, the nine issues of *The Architect* produced by the trio provide a further understanding of their aesthetic interests and their ambitions for the local profession that were both fermented overseas and enacted upon their immediate return.

This chapter examines the nine issues that Duncan, White, and Hill edited from 1956 to 1958, and demonstrates how they were able to transfer their overseas experience into the local profession, using the Institute journal as their platform. After a brief outline of the journal's history, the chapter recounts Duncan, White, and Hill's previous experience as editors and contributors to the publications of the Student Association before they left to go abroad. It analyses their editorial direction, the articles and writers they commissioned during their time at *The Architect*, and the kinds of projects that they featured.

Duncan, White, and Hill assumed responsibility over the journal with two overarching motivations and concomitant aims. One was to galvanise the architectural community through increasing dialogue. The issues articulate their hopes for developing a robust professional community which was open to debate, the sharing of ideas, and the ability to elevate each other in the pursuit of a better local architecture culture. The other aim, was to use the journal as a vehicle to express and share their perspective on architecture and to agitate for change within the industry. To them, the very nature of architectural practice and the role of the architect in society was changing as they experienced abroad and *The Architect* provided them with a platform to exercise these ideas. These twin motivations were directly influenced by their time abroad: both in their immersion within a different architectural context, providing them with a different perspective on their own

community and also through their direct engagement with global architecture culture. This was a culture which they had visited, listened to, and debated together over several years in their flats, in offices, lecture theatres and on the long car rides across the continent and around the UK and they were keen to continue this engagement at home.

By way of demonstrating their participation in a global architectural discourse, and their ability to translate this to their home context via the journal, this chapter focuses on the editorial of June 1956, in which they put forward their ideas for a 'New Brutalism.' This editorial and its manifesto-like qualities is identified as evidence of the kind of discourse with which they were engaged in London. It examines how this idea was encountered, and then filtered through those years of intensity and ferment that occurred during their times living and working together in London. They were then able to reformulate it for their home context and broadcast it using their newfound public platform. This particular editorial piece is used as a lens to further examine the way in which the graduates engaged with architecture culture abroad, and the sense of perspective which the trip provided.

There is no formal archive that relates to the magazine and its production. Instead, this chapter relies heavily on the magazines themselves as historical documents, read together with the experiences of the graduates abroad as pieced together from oral histories and other sources, as seen in the previous chapters.[570]

4.2.2 The Magazine as a Site of Discourse

There has been a raft of new scholarship which looks at the role that the architectural publication played, both in the construction of architectural history, but also in the fostering of architectural communities through their ability to bring people together and spurring them into action. Much of this scholarship has focused on so called 'little magazines', those radical, often independent magazines which Stephen Parnell has describes as being "closely associated with the avant-garde and as such demonstrates a freedom of editorial control for the editors, as they are not worried about alienating advertisers."[571] They tended to be "printed in limited runs, circulated to a select

[570] Apart from the journals themselves, there are no archival holdings for *The Architect*, or any materials relating to its production and history. By the time I had proposed this chapter, John White had sadly passed away, and so was reliant on my original oral history which I had conducted with him, and which didn't discuss this period.
[571] Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," 75.

audience, feel no obligation to appear regularly, have a short life… and are published with little or no regard for commercial gain."[572] Little magazines, with their avant-garde appeal and bombastic spirit, have rightly dominated the scholarship on architectural publications. [573] Yet there has been recent movement into examining the more commercially run and professionally affiliated architectural journals. Work by Paul Hogben on *Architecture,* Stephen Parnell on *Architectural Design,* Phoebus Ilias Panigyrakis on *Architectural Record,* Jessica Kelly's investigations into the *Architectural Review*, along with Andrew Higgot's expansive look at architectural publication in Britain, and Veronique Patteeuw and Lea-Catherine Szacka's anthology on postmodern periodicals and media, have demonstrated that despite their commercial interests and large readership, these journals occupy an equally significant presence within the architectural profession. [574]

Parnell, quoting Steven Heller, makes the claim that "Periodicals actually define groups and movements."[575] This idea is apparent in the direction that *The Architect* took in the mid-1950s, under the stewardship of Duncan, White, and Hill. Across the nine issues that they edited, there is a clear attempt to engage the local profession as a group, and to use the journal as a central mechanism through which an architectural community could be fostered, providing a focal point for an emerging group of young architects, many of whom had recently returned from their working holiday abroad. Their ambition went beyond the remit of a commercial magazine, and in this sense, the journal, while not solely defining this cultural shift, played a visible and crucial role in broadcasting that a shift was occurring.

4.2.3 History of *The Architect*

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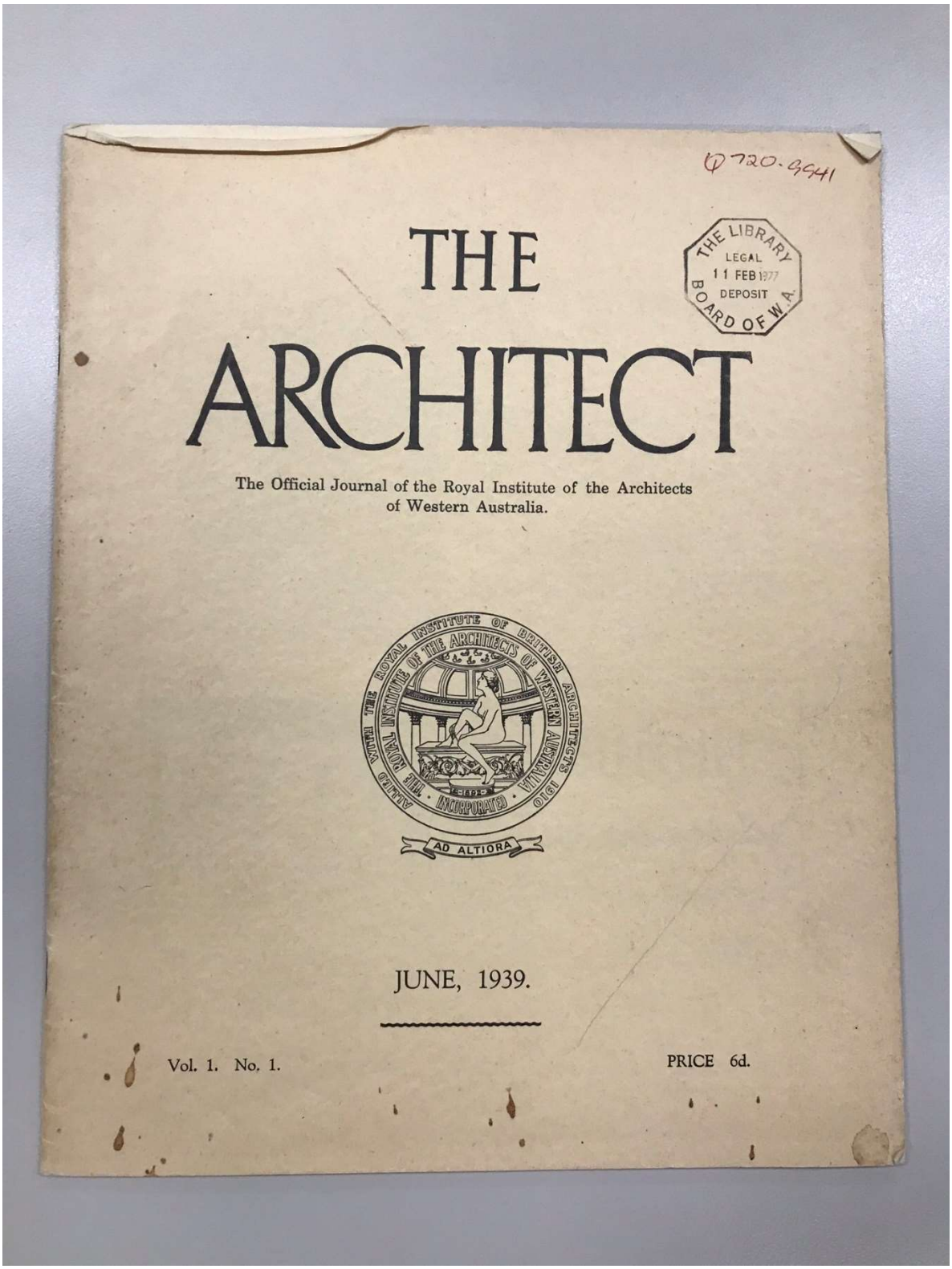
[572] Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," 75.
[573] Most notable of these are: Beatriz Colomina, Craig Buckley and Urtzi Grau, eds. *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X to 197X* (Barcelona: Actar, 2010); Elizabeth Darling, "*Focus:* A Little Magazine and Architectural Modernism in 1930s Britain," *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies,* 3, no. 1 (2012): 39-63; Mitchell Schwarzer, "History and Theory in Architectural Periodicals: Assembling Oppositions," *JSAH,* 58, no. 3 (1999): 342-348; and more recently Elias Redstone, *Archizines* (London: Bedford Press, 2011).
[574] Paul Hogben and Stanislaus Fung, "Reading Australian Architectural Journals as Historical Sources," *Architectural Theory Review* 2, no. 1 (1996):15-29; Paul Hogben, "The Commercialization of *Architecture Australia*, 1975-1980," *Fabrications,* 9, no. 1 (1999): 53-67; Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972."; Phoebus Ilias Panigyrakis, "Architectural Record: 1942-1967," PhD Thesis, *TU Delft,* 2020; Jessica Kelly, *No More Giants: J.M. Richards, Modernism and the Architectural Review* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022); Andrew Higgott, *Mediating Modernism: Architectural Cultures in Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Veronique Patteeuw and Lea-Catherine Szacka, *Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).
[575] Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," 75.

The Architect lies firmly in the category of a professional journal. The official organ of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects WA Chapter from its first issue in 1939 to its continued publication today, it was designed primarily as a professional publication to be circulated amongst architects and closely related building professionals as a way to improve awareness and raise the standard of building in the state. In its inaugural issue, published in June 1939, Reginald Summerhayes laid out the intentions of the journal in his editorial:

> The Institute of Architects has long felt the need of an official publication by means of which the views and aims of the Institute can be placed before the Public, and which will assist the Institute in promoting a wider interest in Architecture and the aesthetic and practical development of our City and Suburbs. The object of this publication is therefore to enlighten the public on the work of the Architect in its various phases and to give the public, the profession and the other various interests in the building industry, current information in regard to the latest building methods, architectural design and construction and other matters of a similar nature.[576]

With a cover price of six pence and stocked in newsagents across Perth, there was an initial ambition to circulate the journal to a wider audience beyond architects. However, the contents of the journal, and its progression over the coming decades ensured that it remained an internal journal for the profession and was rarely read by the public. In its first decades of existence, the journal operated more along the lines of a trade journal, rather than the more publicly accessible professional journals like *Architectural Review*. When Desmond Sands took over the editorial duties in 1954, he clarified the journal's position. He wrote: "'The Architect" is published for architects, to record the activities of the Chapter, the Registration Board and the Students' Association. It circulates mainly in the profession and the building industry and does not attempt to compete on the bookstalls with magazines of more general appeal."[577]

[576] Reginal Summerhayes, "The Architect," *The Architect* 1, no. 1 (June 1939): 11.
[577] D.O. Sands, "Editorial," *The Architect* (March 1954): 10.



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THE ARCHITECT

The Official Journal of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Western Australia.

THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS IN THE FAMILY OF THE ARCHITECTS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1929 INCORPORATED

AD ALTIORA

JUNE, 1939.

Vol. 1. No. 1.

PRICE 6d.

Fig 4.11 The Architect, June 1939 cover. State Library of Western Australia.

From its inauguration in 1939 until the 1950s, the journal adopted a fairly consistent editorial approach and tone. Each issue would feature news, minutes from the Architects Board and Institute meetings, along with updates from the Education Department. It would include updates of competitions, new building products, events and a regularly updated list of registrations along with current building projects. It regularly ran articles, often reprinted from abroad, and transcripts of significant lectures. There was a long running Students' column penned by a member of the Association as discussed in previous chapters, and updates on new literature that was available from the Institute or that might be of interest to members. Under various editorial changes there would be a slight re-orientation of the journal. Eric Leach injected a critical tone in the 1940s, while Desmond Sands, who took it over in the early 1950s increased the coverage of local projects.

Running the chapter journal without remuneration, in a local profession with little interest in recording or publishing their work, meant that running *The Architect* and finding sufficient local content was a constant battle, and remains so today.[578] The issues from this period are littered with pleas for submissions and project updates from the profession, and it remained an arduous task. From 1954 to 1956, Sands, along with an editorial board, ran the journal, but the difficulties of publishing and the increased responsibilities within his practice meant he soon moved on. It was clear that in order to push past the ambivalence of the local profession, a new generation with less responsibility and a degree of naivety would be needed if there was to be any real change within the journal.

[578] I was the editor of the journal from 2011-2012 and experienced these same issues.

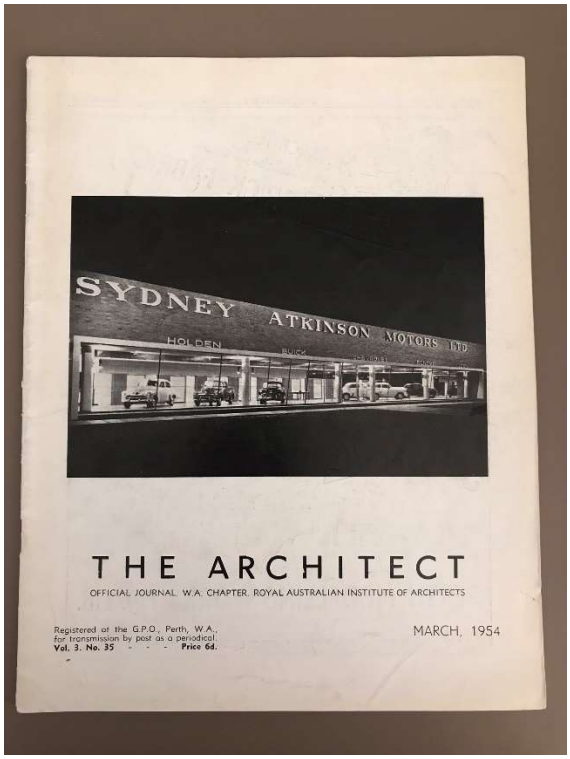

Fig 4.12 Selection of *The Architect* covers. September 1949, March 1954. Australian Institute of Architects, WA Chapter collection.

4.2.4 Student Journals

When Duncan, White, and Hill assumed the editorial role in 1956, it was not their first experience in publishing. As students and through the leadership roles within the Association, they had been active in producing and contributing to a series of student publications. Principally, this was through their involvement with the student journal *PHI*, which began in 1950 when they were second and third year students.

PHI was the official magazine of the Architectural Students Association of Western Australia, as the Architectural Association had become, and was an attempt to continue the tradition of student run publications which had begun in 1937, with the *Tee Square Journal*. The publication of the *Tee Square Journal* stalled with the war and never made it past the first issue, and so *PHI*, which was first published in February 1950, was an attempt to revive it. The inaugural editor of *PHI*, Eustace G. Cohen, noted this in his opening salvo:

> The Association has for some considerable time felt the necessity for a magazine in which the students can expound their ideas, criticisms, theories, and exhibit some of their work. Whilst following similar lines to its predecessor, the 'Tee Square Journal", published prior to the War, the editorial staff has done its utmost to raise the standard of "*PHI*" in keeping with the progressive outlook which the Association inspires, and it is to be hoped that by this publication an even greater interest will be created among the students.[579]

The arrival of *PHI*, and the language that it used to rally the new student body, signaled a new era for the student association. It was to be progressive, active, and would agitate loudly for change within the profession and the education sector. By invoking the spirit of the *Tee Square Journal*, it is evident that this new group of postwar students retained the idea that publications would be a key pillar of their activities, and central to the ongoing success of the student body. Cohen emphasized this idea in his first editorial:

> Students are not just slaves to study but are enthusiastic and critical members of the profession. Their outlook is not purely critical nor merely abject. Their aim is to build up a publication which will perhaps not in this edition, nor the next, but in

[579] E.G. Cohen, "Editorial," *PHI* 1 (1950): n.p.

> the future be able to aid and abet Architects in creating a consciousness among the public as to what good architecture means to the community.[580]

When Issue 1 was published, Duncan, White, and Hill were already closely involved with the activities of the Association and *PHI*. Though not in official leadership roles, both Duncan and Hill, then in Second Year, are listed in the 'officers and otherwisers' section of the journal - Duncan as "Chief arguer during absence of Bruce Hawkins" and Hill as "Chief Celebrator".[581] White, who was in Third Year at the time, contributed an article on 'Pure Design' in which he praised Naval Architecture as a "profession untainted by style and sophistication, by ostentation, vulgarity or meanness"[582] along with an illustration of his own design from a three hour esquisse for a modern information kiosk. The second issue of *PHI* was published the following year in January 1951, and this time White and Hill were part of the reporting staff within the editorial team. White again contributed a watercolour drawing and an article, this time on the possibility of introducing architectural education into high schools, and Duncan penned an article on 'The case for Laminated Wood'.[583] The third and final issue of *PHI* was published in January 1953. White and Duncan had just graduated from their diploma course in the month prior, with Hill entering into his final year of study.

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[580] E.G. Cohen, "Editorial," n.p.
[581] "Social Notes," *PHI* 1 (1950): n.p.
[582] John White, "Pure Design," *PHI* 1 (1950): n.p
[583] John White, "Aiming High," *PHI* 2 (1951): 6-8; and J.K. Duncan, "The Case for Laminated Wood," *PHI* 2 (1951): 28-30.

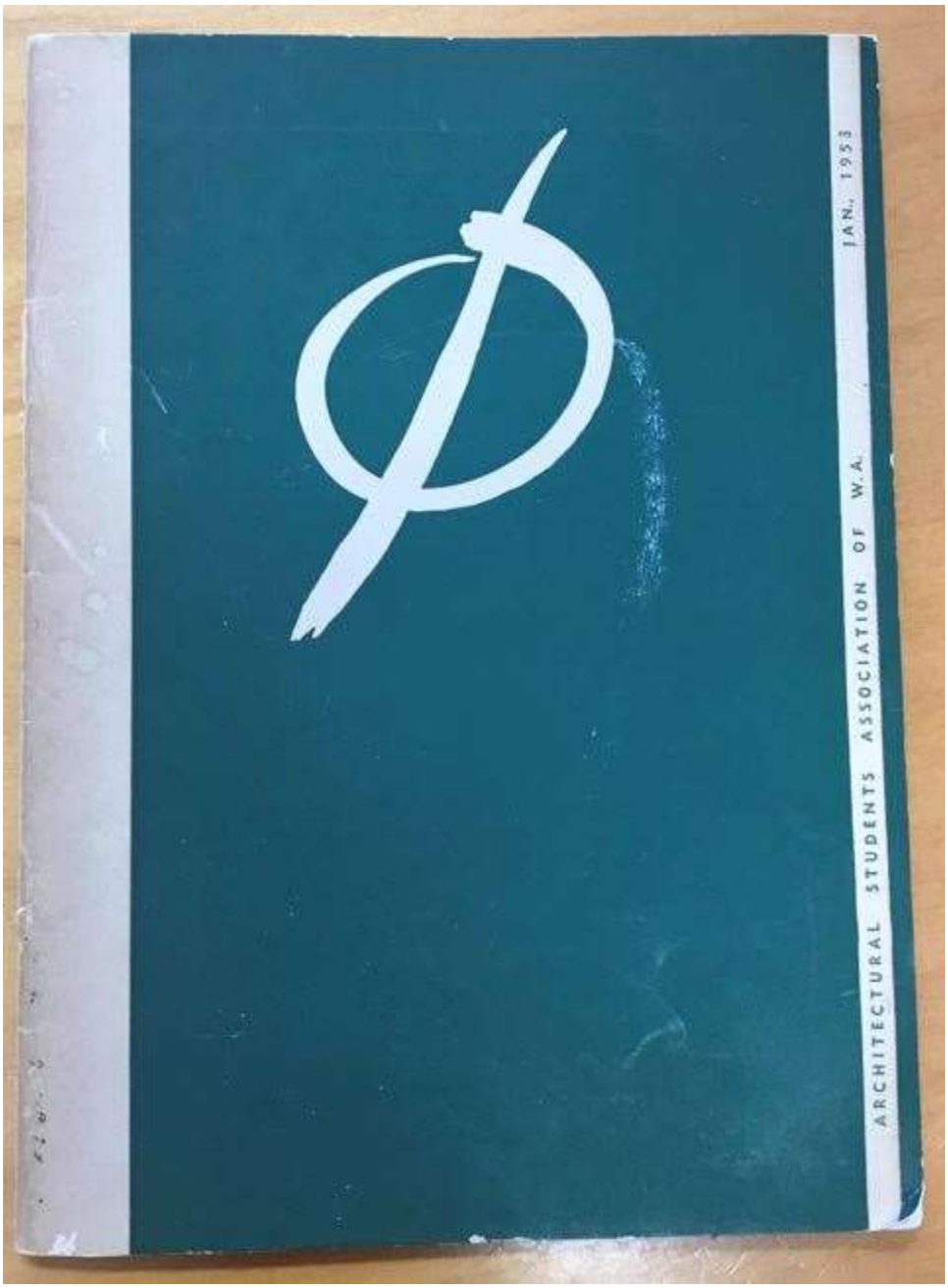

Fig 4.13 *PHI* 3 (1953). Private Collection, Geoffrey London.

This issue saw John White assume the role as editor, Duncan was his Sub-editor, and Lex Hill served on the editorial staff. Published just months before the three left for England, the issue bristled with the ambition and desire of the new student body. Under White's direction, the issue was defiantly radical and more outspoken in its tone than the previous two issues, which had toed a careful line between professionalism and encouragement of the student body. In White's editorial his tone is decisive:

> It is at last possible to suggest that we of the Architectural Profession are approaching the end of the hysterical period which followed World War II, and are now doing some of the things that we have for so long been talking about. For the last six or seven years, we have had the architectural soap-boxers telling us and the layman, that things are not good enough, and we must strive for a truer and more logical Architecture and that a new order is upon us fully deserving of these wonderful aims. We were stirred; but having failed to rouse the minds of their neo-Victorian compatriots some of these urgers have dismounted their soapboxes and have begun to take their own advice.[584]

For White, and the editorial staff, theirs was a practical radicalism, deeply rooted in the desire to transform and improve standards of architectural practice in Western Australia within a professional capacity. There was little interest in the 'art' of architecture. The issue was largely dedicated to a passionate examination of building by laws which was seen as a particularly pressing issue at the time. In an interview, White recalled the hopes of the editorial team at the time:

> I killed off *PHI* by spending all its resources on the last issue in which we were going to change the world…The final edition of *PHI* that we wrote was an attempt to produce performance specifications through regulation – instead of just saying a ceiling must be 8 feet high you would have to give reasons for it being so. If you put a window in a wall you would have to have a reason to put it in a particular place to do with ventilation and movement of the sun and things like that. Which were not inherent in the local authority by laws which were all different according

[584] John White, "Editorial," *PHI* 3 (1952): 2.

> to who wrote them. We hoped to change the world as a result of that but it didn't change.[585]

The issue of by laws took up most of the issue, supplemented with a report from Geoffrey Summerhayes on his return from America, and an article by Hill on modern furniture. Despite the rousing editorial, as White described, with this issue of *PHI* the journal was indeed 'killed off', in large part helped by the fact that many of the key driving figures involved with the publication of the journal would shortly leave for their extended working holidays abroad. White, Duncan and Hill's close relationship and shared ideals, which can be seen through their work together on *PHI*, was naturally intensified during their time in London living and travelling together. Indeed, Duncan had originally planned to ride home with White, Lex and Barbara Hill across the continent, but instead stayed on in London and sailed home several months later.[586]

4.2.5 Editing *The Architect*

White and Hill returned home in September 1955, and Duncan soon followed, arriving in January 1956. It became abundantly clear that their ambition to be involved with the profession had not diminished. As seen in the previous chapter, John White shortly established his own practice, John White Architects, and soon had a roster full of residential projects. Hill was running the Shiralee and was soon made a partner at McDonald and Whitaker. John Duncan went straight into his father's practice, Duncan, Stephen and Mercer, where he was also made partner. At the same time that they returned to Perth, Desmond Sands had decided to end his tenure as editor of *The Architect*. Increasingly busy with his practice, there was also a sense of frustration in running the journal. In December 1955, his last issue, he wrote: "An editor's main difficulty is in collecting the material from various sources in time and in form for publication… An editor has therefore to be prepared to set aside the time to obtain the material himself and to follow up all those concerned, and most Architects can only afford to give this time for a limited period."[587] Shortly after the December issue was released, White, Hill and Duncan were brought on board as the new editors of the journal.

Given the considerable responsibilities each had within their practices, taking on this extra commitment is testament to the belief the three had in wanting to improve local discourse and

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[585] John White, interview with Andrew Murray, 2 October, 2019, Bunbury, W.A.
[586] Beth Duncan, interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021, Swanbourne, W.A.
[587] D.O. Sands, "Editorial," *The Architect* (December 1955): 11.

contribute to the profession. But it also speaks to the youthful naivety of the editors at the time, buoyed by their engagement with architecture abroad and an ambition that they could bypass the difficulties experienced by Sands. Sharing the load between three was also presumably an attempt to make the task more manageable, but as Duncan described: "We were all a bit young and enthusiastic in those days."[588] Their first issue was published in March 1956 and was, by their own admission, largely a transitional one given the trio had only accepted the role a fortnight before the journal was sent off to the printers. Rather than reshaping the whole issue, they used the editorial space to lay out some practical issues for future issues, which were in line with their professional goals:

> On the purely practical side, we hope to bring about an improvement in the format of the material of the Journal, and in the standard of advertising. We trust that the subject matter will be diverse and interesting, and we hope in so doing to bring about an awakening consciousness of the function of Architecture.[589]

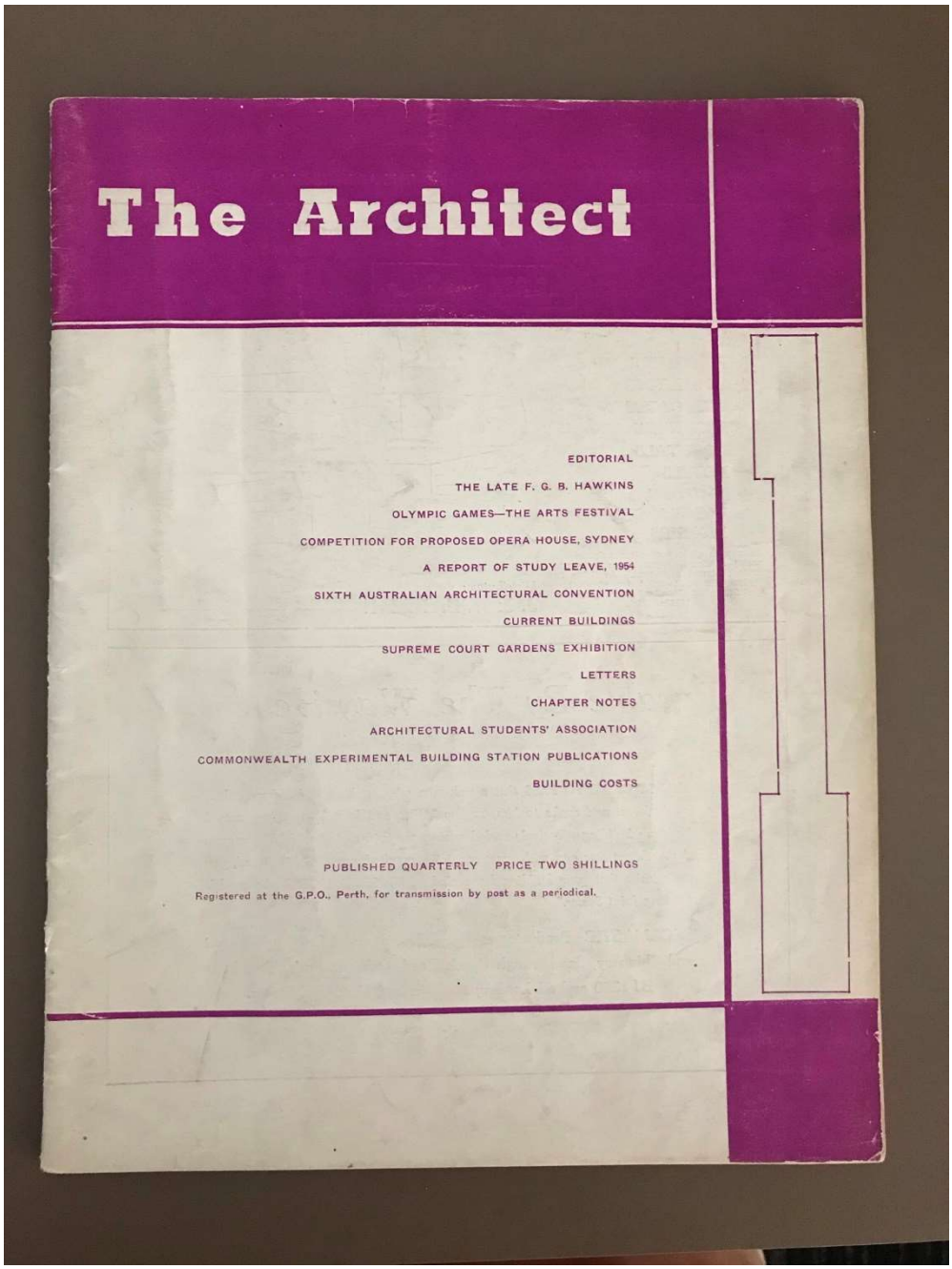
But the trio also use the limited space of their first editorial to broadcast their hopes for their editorial term, and for the local profession:

> Life in the W.A. Chapter has been at a relatively low ebb for many a year. Not enough contentious matter is allowed to rise to the surface to animate our Architects…we are living in a changing world – a world in which the status and working of an Architect cannot remain static. We are here a community in which everyone is a member. So help to give this community direction; attend your Chapter Meetings; write to us on any subject, and promptly supply to our editorial Committee any information which you promise.[590]

It was hardly the revolutionary statements seen in *PHI*. But with this short editorial, they presented a definite direction, and their agenda and ambition for the journal was laid bare. They were interested in establishing a productive dialogue and were keen to shift the narrative around practice, bringing it in line with the pressing issues which faced the discipline and the role of the

[588] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[589] John White, John Duncan, and Lex Hill, "Editorial," *The Architect* (March 1956): 11.
[590] White, Duncan, Hill, "Editorial," (March 1956): 11.

architect. Central to this reform was in developing a robust professional community, and the journal was to be an essential ingredient in this development.



The Architect

EDITORIAL
THE LATE F. G. B. HAWKINS
OLYMPIC GAMES—THE ARTS FESTIVAL
COMPETITION FOR PROPOSED OPERA HOUSE, SYDNEY
A REPORT OF STUDY LEAVE, 1954
SIXTH AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURAL CONVENTION
CURRENT BUILDINGS
SUPREME COURT GARDENS EXHIBITION
LETTERS
CHAPTER NOTES
ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
COMMONWEALTH EXPERIMENTAL BUILDING STATION PUBLICATIONS
BUILDING COSTS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY PRICE TWO SHILLINGS

Registered at the G.P.O., Perth, for transmission by post as a periodical.

Fig 4.14 *The Architect* March 1956, cover. Australian Institute of Architects, WA Chapter collection.

In the following issues, Duncan, White, and Hill attempted to engage the architectural community in a lively dialogue. They used the magazine as a vehicle to promote what they saw as positive aspects to the profession and to highlight issues that they saw as urgent or worthy of highlighting in a public forum. It is unclear how much material was solicited directly by them, or was submitted to the journal, but a selection of key articles from their time as editors begins to build up a kind of picture of the hopes that they had for the local profession.

In their second issue, an editorial voice begins to emerge, although it is clear they are still dealing with the transition from the previous editors, and already the issues of procuring material which plagued Sands's time were evident. A comment column was introduced alongside the editorial, which allowed the editors to directly respond to current events, providing critique rather than simply reporting items as news. They retained the 'School of Architecture' column, which Sands had initiated, and expanded it through inviting the new head of PTC, Francis Senior Bolland, to provide an article on the current state of education in Britain and Australia.[591] They also published a collection of four modern houses, including by prominent ex-student association members Mervyn Parry and Peter Arney, along with a report on transport in Copenhagen by Anders Nyvig.

Their third issue, in September 1956, is perhaps the purest indication of the editors' intentions for the journal. Alongside each article is a short editorial comment by way of introduction of framing, and an editorial voice and position is established. The issue included a transcription of a talk by Pietro Belluschi at the recent RAIA Convention in Adelaide, and a lengthy article by local artist, and close friend of John White, Howard Taylor on the relationship between mural painting and architecture. The editorial note reads: "In this short survey of mural painting, the aim is to examine the subject in a general way, hoping that it will not only be instructive, but also suggestive. It is a review of the problems and possibilities and we believe that the possibilities are so interesting and of value so greatly outweighing any difficulties, that we submit this article as a reminder to the Architect that this is so."[592] The editors themselves contributed an article on paint technology, in a clear continuation of the editors' fascination with new building technologies seen in their article for *PHI*, alongside coverage of four building projects: the Bronze Medal winning Nurses' Quarters at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, and three new schools designed by the

[591] F.S. Bolland, "Education," *The Architect* (June 1956): 21.
[592] Howard Taylor, "Mural Painting and the Artist," *The Architect* (September 1956): 20-23. Taylor and White were close friends and frequently collaborated on work together.

PWD.[593] These were among the first major modern public buildings in the state, and significant local milestones for the profession. The interest in schools also reflected the editors' current interests, particularly developed in England through Duncan's time with Denis Clarke Hall and Bazeley and Barbary, and underscored by the apologetic editorial note which accompanied the coverage: "We regret, however, that the Department were not able to make available to "The Architect" any plans or details of the schools which we are illustrating. School design is becoming a highly specialized field, and it would have been most interesting to have supplemented the photographs with planning details."[594] There was also extensive coverage of the new 'Conditions of Contract' issued by the RAIA, which stretched across two issues.

The debt to their time in England showed through more strongly in some moments than others. John Duncan introduced a comment section that was close to Astragal's 'Notes and Topics' section in *The Architects' Journal* where he would highlight a number of local issues, brief exhibition reviews, and errata. He even had his own 'Outrage' column, where he would award local affronts to design culture, directly referencing Ian Nairn's special issue of *Architectural Review* by the same name from the year before.[595]

[593] "Public Works Department," *The Architect* (September 1956): 29-35.
[594] "Public Works Department," *The Architect* (September 1956): 29.
[595] "Outrage: Vestry at Bradwell-on-Sea," *The Architectural Review* 117, no. 699(1955): 204; John Duncan, "Outrage," *The Architect* (June 1956): 13.

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Fig 4.15 Modern projects featured in *The Architect* chosen by Duncan, White and Hill. King Edward Memorial Hospital Nurses’ Quarters, 1952. SLWA WA Government photographer (above); John Curtin High School 1956. Photographer: Fritz Kos, 1964. SLWA. BA 1595/10/731 (below).

4.2.6 Frustrations and Success

As the three co-editors settled into their roles, the frustration in sourcing material became evident, and the issues often lacked direction. In their cycle of news, Institute updates and board reports, they fell back into the pattern typical under Des Sands's command. Some moments have clarity – in particular the June 1957 issue, in which their interest in the student body re-appears. In a special issue dedicated to the Perth Technical College course, they highlighted recent exhibitions, course notes, and included the most detailed coverage of individual student projects to date in *The Architect,* afforded the same status as major built projects.[596] But a blank page and small comment in the middle of their fourth issue perhaps best sums up the difficulties the editors faced:

> M.L.C. Building: It was intended to publish a preliminary review of the work being done on the M.L.C. Building in St. George's Terrace, but unfortunately the material did not come to hand in time for this issue. We offer our sincere apologies to those advertisers who contributed on this basis.[597]

For their final issue, published in April 1958, they produced a special volume designed to coincide with the Eighth RAIA Convention. Breaking with the traditional journal format, this was a compilation of recent building projects in the state as a kind of record of fact and a souvenir for visiting delegates. The editors were interested in showcasing the best and most modern buildings in the state to the visitors. As a final issue, it is a perfect summation of their intent in trying to elevate the local profession and present it as the work of a community. They were obviously proud of the issue, and the buildings featured, so much so that Duncan sent issues out to people they admired internationally, including his former employer Goldfinger.[598]

The nine issues that Duncan, White and Hill edited do not present a complete representation of their ambitions outlined in their first editorial, "to animate our Architects… [in] a world in which the status and working on an Architect cannot remain static".[599] Instead, for much of their editorial reign, the issues are uneven and patchy, and in reality, more accurately reflect the

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[596] *The Architect* (June 1957).
[597] "MLC Building," *The Architect* (December 1956): 32.
[598] John Duncan, Letter to Erno Goldfinger, 17 September 1958. The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/268/4.letter.
[599] White, Duncan, Hill, "Editorial," (March 1956): 11.

enormous difficulties that they encountered in sourcing material and engaging architects to submit their projects. Despite these issues, through their highlighting of particular architectural projects, the extensive coverage given to education and the promotion of the Perth Technical College, an interest in modern technologies, and the pragmatics of architectural practice, their editorial ambition remained close to the surface. For them it was through education, a critical engagement with contemporary building materials and construction technology, and a continual re-evaluation of the role of the architect and their commitment to society that was at the core of their vision for a progressive and robust architecture culture in Western Australia. While they might have struggled to communicate these aims through the general content as clearly as they would have hoped, in the space they carved out each issue for a brief editorial column, they allowed their own personal voices and directives to consistently break through.

4.2.7 Using the Editorial

When pressed on his editorial direction for the magazine in his interview with Jane Fleming, Duncan replied simply: "Fight like mad just to get anything to put into it!"[600] While sourcing material for the magazine remained an issue throughout their tenure, and directed much of what ended up in the journal by necessity rather than editorial choice, it was not without a fighting effort put up by the new team.

The editorial columns at the beginning of each issue were not reliant on external submissions and so provide the most intact vision for the ambition they had for the journal. The editorials are a clearly different tone to the general content of the magazine, and they speak directly of their vision for the profession and they provide a vehicle for them to voice their opinion to the wider Institute body. That an editorial column appears at all is in itself a significant gesture. It marks a return to the strong editorial voice of the magazine not seen since Eric Leach's tenure in the late 1940s, and announces the desire for the new editors to use this magazine in part, as their mouthpiece, as they did in *PHI*. Compared to Leach's editorials which were fairly restrained, the ideological ambition of White, Duncan and Hill are plainly evident in their tone, and many are indeed closer to the kind of proselytizing typically seen in 'little magazines' rather than professional and trade journals. Other official Institute periodicals across the country at the time, like the *RVIA Bulletin* in Victoria, were predominantly bulletin-style newsletters with little interest

[600] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.

in discursive engagement. Thus, these editorials stand out as unusual in Australia as Institutional critiques.[601] It was not until 1961 when the Tasmanian Institute journal was launched that a similarly vocal and critical voice appeared in the professional sphere, which otherwise remained bound up within various student journals, pamphlets, and most notably *Cross-Section,* an industry newsletter published by the Department of Architecture at the University of Melbourne from 1952.[602]

The short editorials, around 300 words in length covered everything from shortfalls in education, to issues over town planning and statutory decisions. Often openly critical and challenging, they framed these ideas and opened up a space for debate, calling out for the readers to engage. An example comes from the issue of education where they wrote, "Our social machine is crying out for products of such an establishment [specialized schools], and is therefore only logical that a subsidiary machine should be produced for the purpose of turning out 'technicians', a shop in which you can buy a living for the cost of five years' labour."[603]

Together, this group of editorials provide a keen insight into the ambitions of the young architects and constitute a set of articulated positions in a professional setting where architects rarely wrote. But it was in their second issue as editors, which provides perhaps the best insight into their ambitions as editors for the journal, and offers a commentary that is alive with the enthusiasm and drive that carried over from their time abroad. In this issue, they produced the closest thing to a manifesto perhaps produced in WA until that point, which focused on the idea of the 'New Brutalism'. Through an examination of how this term came to appear in their editorial, it provides a lens through which to view the translation of their experiences abroad into a local context, and illustrates the kind of engagement that Perth architects had with contemporary British discourse.

4.2.8 The New Brutalism

The second issue released in June 1956, showed a confidence and ambition that was lacking in their first transitional issue. In it, their editorial column was a kind of manifesto, laying out the

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[601] Comparable chapter journals from this time included: *Centreline* (1962, QLD); *Bulletin* (1958, NSW); *R.V.I.A Bulletin* (1949, Vic.).; *South Australian Chapter Bulletin* (1965, S.A).

[602] Cross-Section was published from 1952-1971, but was not a student journal. More critically inclined student journals from this time include: *Smudges* (Vic.), *Slate* (Vic.), *Fabric* (S.A), *Scarab* (QLD), and *ASM* (QLD). See: Elizabeth Musgrave, "What's 'out' . . . what's 'in' Revolution versus Evolution: John Dalton Architect as Pamphleteer," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 30, Open*, eds. Alexandra Brown and Andrew Leach (Gold Coast, Qld: SAHANZ, 2013): 461-471.

[603] John White, John Duncan, and Lex Hill, "Editorial," *The Architect* (June 1957): 9.

editors' vision for the future of the architectural profession in WA, a vision which centered on the idea of the 'New Brutalism':

> The great transition which we have seen in recent months, from the state where an Architect pleaded for a tender, to the present position where the Builder seeks every opportunity to submit an estimate, serves mainly to emphasise the grave inadequacies of the Building Professions. Men are worth more than this, and we could well afford to examine our antiquated practice with a view to discarding the 'upper-classness' of Architecture in favour of the more realistic and inevitable mechanization, or even automation.
>
> As a whole we still haven't learnt the lesson of the turn of the century, when Engineers showed us that Structure is the essence of Building, and that the position of an Architect was co-ordinator (and almost redundant), not decorator. We compromised by learning part of the Engineer's art and produced those solid basic building of the twenties – the original brutalism. We continue in this frame of mind to-day despite the advent of pre-fabrication, heating, ventilation, lighting, building equipment – all of which are professions comparable to the nineteenth century Engineer. We cannot hope to master these facets even in the same partial manner as we did structural mechanics; yet these are the things that buildings are made of, and consequently Architecture. This is the 'new Brutalism'.
>
> The alternatives are to continue as at present with the big bluff and a disorganized Building Industry, or accept the fact that professional status must change, and that we can be no more than a Chairman whilst others design the building. The way is open, and already indicated in overseas countries.[604]

This editorial-cum-manifesto builds upon long held concerns of the editors previously articulated by the editors in the pages of *PHI*, and interrogates the changing role of the architect, the profession's difficult entanglement with engineering, and increasing technological advances. In part, it echoes White's call for a "truer and more logical Architecture" in his 1953 editorial,[605]

[604] John White, John Duncan, and Lex Hill, "Editorial," *The Architect* 3, 44 (June 1956): 9.
[605] White, "Editorial," 2.

Duncan's interest in the technical advances of Laminated Timber, and White's article on Naval Architecture, which he wrote:

> To students of architecture, hoping to take their place in a profession which, by shrewd management, has at last removed from itself the embarrassing stigma of being called an art, it would be interesting to glance upon another profession which still continues the now unfamiliar tradition of creating objects of beauty that fulfil also the purpose for which they were intended.[606]

These ideas and concerns over the changing role of the architect and the division of architectural engagement were formulated within the classrooms of PTC and taken with them abroad. Here they were tested, refined and reframed through their encounter with the architecture culture of Britain and the distance from home that the trip afforded them, before being reworked back home in this editorial piece.

Clearly, the time that they spent living and working together in London had altered their views on the role of the architect and what might constitute 'true' architectural expression. As the editorial indicates, it was the novel idea of the 'New Brutalism' which they would encounter in Britain which would prove to be the catalyst for their shifting perspectives. What they provide in the editorial is not simply a restating of the movement, or a historical overview and survey of the term, rather, but rather they use the term as the basis for redefining their previous line of inquiry. Through an interrogation of their early use of the term 'New Brutalism' - it was only two years old when the editorial was published - in a location far from the tight-knit community in London from which it emerged, it reveals much about their experiences on the working holiday and the way ideas are circulated within a global profession.

4.2.9 Encountering the New Brutalism

The time that Duncan, White and Hill were working in London coincided with the energetic discussions around New Brutalism that broke out amongst young British architects following the publication of Alison and Peter Smithson's article on their unbuilt Soho House project in *Architectural Design* in December 1953.[607] Their time in the UK perfectly overlapped with what Dirk van Den Heuvel has described as the 'first phase of Brutalism' which lasted from 1953 to

[606] White, "Pure Design," n.p.
[607] Alison and Peter Smithson, "House in Soho, London," *Architectural Design* 23, no.1 (1953): 342.

1957, a moment which saw intense debate and contested meanings for the term across various forums within British discourse.[608]

When the term was first published in the *AD* article, Lex Hill was still in Perth, getting ready to sail across, but both White and Duncan had been in England for almost six months, and it is likely they read the issue when there. Both Whitaker and Duncan were working in the office of Denis Clarke Hall at the time, and it would be through this connection that they would have also been made aware of the Smithsons, and their new school being built out at Hunstanton. Clarke Hall had been the juror that awarded the Hunstanton School competition to the Smithsons in 1950 and the building was under construction while Duncan and Whitaker were in the office. It is almost certain that talk of the building would have been echoing through the office, particularly given the high-profile nature of the competition. The building of Hunstanton School was a major event in the British architectural world, subject to significant coverage in both *Architectural Review*, *The Architects' Journal* and *Architectural Design* including two lengthy articles which detailed the construction of the building published in September 1953.[609] Clearly for the group of Perth architects living together in Earls Court the building became somewhat an object of fascination, and shortly after these articles were published a group of them set out to visit it. As discussed in chapter 3.3, the school became a key destination, with a record of at least Chisholm, Lidbury, Whitaker, and White all visiting it while under construction in early 1954.[610] Although the details of who else might have visited it are lost to the sands of time, it is clear that by the time the building was opened in September 1954 it was well known, appreciated, and physically visited by the broader Western Australian graduate architect community in London.

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[608] Dirk van den Heuvel, "Between Brutalists: The Banham Hypothesis and the Smithson Way of Life," *The Journal of Architecture* 20, no. 2 (2015): 298.
[609] "Secondary School at Hunstanton," *The Architects' Journal* 118 (Sep 10 1953): 323-328; "Hunstanton Secondary Modern School," *Architectural Design* 23, no. 11 (September 1953): 238-247.
[610] Whitaker and White visited in April 1954. Chisholm and Lidbury went in June 1954. The school officially opened in September 1954.

Fig 4.16 Hunstanton School, Hunstanton. Alison and Peter Smithson, 1954. Photograph: Edwin Whitaker, taken in April 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

At the time that they visited the Hunstanton school and had developed their appreciation for the building and the architects, the term 'New Brutalism' was yet to be formally linked to the building, at least in a published form. However, Steven Parnell has noted that during this time the term was being used "among the small groups of fashionable architects who primarily worked at the London Country Council (LCC) architects' department and taught or studied at the AA."[611] It was not until September 1954 that the term was directly linked to the building in articles and editorial notes across both *AR* and *AJ*. The lengthy coverage of the building published in *The Architectural Review* makes it clear however, that by this time the phrase had become colloquially attached to the building and was seemingly in general use by a particular group of young architects and the articles notes it was "a phrase which is already being picked up by the Smithsons' contemporaries to defend atrocities'"[612] The link was cemented by Theo Crosby, Alison and Peter Smithson in their statement published in *Architectural Design* in January 1955 where they wrote that Hunstanton was 'the first realization of the New Brutalism in England'.[613]

It is difficult to know exactly how immersed the Perth graduates were in this discourse as it unfolded in London amongst the architectural community. As demonstrated in previous chapters, WA graduate architects regularly attended talks at the AA and the RIBA, and were enthusiastic readers of the latest journals, and so were clearly interested in the broader discussions occurring around them. Examples of talks they likely attended further add to the picture, and the kinds of discussions they would have encountered that might have added to their own interpretation of the term. One such event was a debate staged at the AA in February 1955, attended by Erno Goldfinger, and it is highly likely the graduates, or at least Duncan, given his close relationship with Goldfinger and the AA, would have attended. The talk debated the idea 'Aesthetic Control over Architects' and included responses from Jellicoe, William Howell and Robert Furneaux Jordan, Max Fry and Peter Smithson.[614] The debate covered ideas of architectural control and aesthetic responsibility, which finds clear echo in White, Duncan and Hill's later editorial manifesto and their anxiety over the changing role of the architect and their position within a rapidly changing construction industry. While not directly about the 'New Brutalism,' remarks like this made by

[611] Parnell, "Architectural Design, 1954-1972," 259.
[612] Philip Johnson, "School at Hunstanton," *Architectural Review,* 116, no. 693 (1 September 1954), p. 152.
[613] Theo Crosby, Alison Smithson, and Peter Smithson, "The New Brutalism," *Architectural Design* 25, no. 1 (January 1955): 1.
[614] "Aesthetic control over Architects," *The AA Journal* 70, no. 791 (April 1955): 253.

Peter Smithson during the debate provide compelling comparisons and evidence of the diverse sources they might have called onto to clarify their position:

> If a town could be developed through a principle of urbanism it would be possible for the architect to take his correct place in its creation. It is obvious that we have to do big-scale development, and the bigger it becomes the more need there is for some sort of control.[615]

Together with their enthusiastic visits to the building, it would be fair to assume that Duncan, White, and Hill were aware of, and engaged with, the idea of New Brutalism as it existed from its first public mention in 1953 until the end of 1955. Beth Duncan recalled to me that John was very interested in the idea of New Brutalism and the Smithsons whilst there, and later oral histories with Duncan in the 1980s reveal he had an ongoing interest with the movement.[616] Significantly, the time during which the group of Perth architects were engaged with the building and the term was before the infamous Banham article 'The New Brutalism' which substantially reworked and recast the movement as a stylistic one, where he introduced his 'three qualities' and sheared the movement of much of its ethical roots.[617] By the time Banham's article was published in December 1955, both White and Hill had arrived home, and Duncan was on board a ship sailing between London and Perth. This meant the three arrived in Perth with an understanding of 'New Brutalism' formed through readings of the Smithsons' original idea along with those picked up through the informal conversations and chatter that surrounded them in their offices and their association with the AA. This is the version that would inform their editorial.

Reading through Duncan, White and Hill's editorial and the various statements by the Smithsons and Theo Crosby a shared ideal begins to emerge, indicating Perth architects' close engagement with the debates unfolding around them in the UK during this first phase of Brutalism. Perhaps the closest affinity between the two conceptions of the term can be found in a statement by the Smithsons and published in *The Architectural Review* in April 1954.

> It is necessary to create an architecture of reality… we wish to see towns and buildings which do not make us feel ashamed, ashamed that we cannot realise the

[615] "Aesthetic control over Architects," 253.
[616] Beth Duncan, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 24 April 2020; Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983. In this interview Duncan talks at length about his interest in the movement.
[617] Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review* 118, no. 708 (December 1955): 354-361.

> potential of the twentieth century, ashamed that philosophers and physicists must think us fools, and painters think us irrelevant. We live in moron-made cities. Out generation must try and produce evidence that men are at work.[618]

Here, the Smithsons argue for an architecture rooted in the reality of the society, one that is honest and can embrace the progress of the century. This emphasis on reality and real life is echoed through the editorial text of Duncan, White, and Hill, where they pointedly instruct "we could well afford to examine our antiquated practice with a view to discarding the 'upper-classness' of Architecture in favour of the more realistic and inevitable mechanization, or even automation."[619]

Both camps also make arguments for a certain level of 'hands-off' detailing as an architectural approach, with the architect acting more as a co-ordinator of services than designer. In the Soho House article the Smithsons wrote, "It is our intention in this building to have the structure exposed entirely, without internal finishes wherever practicable. The Contractor should aim at a high standard of basic construction as in a small warehouse."[620] They also note "The bars and colour variation have some sort of natural tension when laid by a good bricklayer."[621] The emphasis is placed on the contractor's role in the design of the house, rather than the architect, and it is the contractor who becomes responsible for both the construction techniques and the internal finishes. In the January 1955 manifesto, the Smithsons further suggest that New Brutalism "has nothing to do with craft. We see architecture as a direct way of life."[622] This idea is reiterated by Duncan, White and Hill when they ask that architects adopt the role of "chairman' of the building site, 'whilst others design the building."[623] The emphasis on construction technology and the embrace of the contractors and engineers over the architect's craft articulates an interest in engaging with the realities of construction and the pragmatics of building in the postwar period. It demonstrates the potential the graduates saw in New Brutalism both as an ideology and a design methodology. The words of the Smithsons and Crosby, together with their visit to Hunstanton, aligned with their own line of inquiry and personal debates, and there is a clear sense that Duncan,

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[618] Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, "Future: The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review* 115, no. 688 (April 1954): 274-275.
[619] White, Duncan, and Hill, "Editorial," (June 1956): 9.
[620] Smithson and Smithson, "House in Soho, London," 342.
[621] Smithson and Smithson, "House in Soho, London," 342.
[622] Crosby, Smithson, and Smithson, "The New Brutalism," 1.
[623] White, Duncan, and Hill, "Editorial," (June 1956): 9.

White and Hill were able to engage directly with these statements and use them to reify their own vision for the future of the profession. It was not that this was a new idea, but rather, it provided a different perspective and context through which to view their existing critique.[624]

Mark Wigley has previously argued that "the architect's journey is not a journey of discovery but of confirmation, a rehearsal or a repetition of something that is already in place."[625] Duncan, White and Hill left Perth with a series of questions and a critical view of practice, which as Wigley describes, were subsequently confirmed, tested, and rehearsed abroad with a set of new stimuli, before being restated upon their return. Like most of the students at PTC, they were avid readers of architectural magazines, which arrived in Perth just under a month after publication in Europe, UK, and the US. It is almost certain that they would have encountered the New Brutalism and the work of the Smithsons through the pages of these journals without having made the trip to London. But it was the physical act of going there, seeing the buildings, and attending the debates which gives the movement a kind of physical presence. The ability to debate with each other within the office, in their apartment, at the pub, and during long drives across the country provided them with space, time and distance to process these ideas and to reposition them which is impossible without the freedom and immersion that travel enabled.

4.2.10 Conclusion

The editorship of Duncan, White and Hill would not last. The demands of practice, and the continual frustration over the lack of engagement and submissions from their peers saw their tenure end after two years. Duncan would stay on and edit one more issue with Gilbert Nicol, but the trio had evidently moved on to focus on their practices and other professional appointments. While White would continue to be involved in publishing throughout his career, including with later student publications, the others rarely, if ever, returned to writing.

By taking over the editorial position, the trio's intention for the local profession was clear. Through the platform of the journal, they were attempting to foster an actively engaged architectural community with a vibrant culture of discourse at its centre. In the two years that they spent at the

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[624] For a further, more in-depth discussion on New Brutalism and its translation to WA, see : Andrew Murray, "Brutal Beginnings: The New Brutalism and Western Australia in the 1950s," *The Journal of Architecture* 26, no. 8(2021): 1219-1240.

[625] Mark Wigley, "The Myth of the Local," in *Architects' Journeys: Building, Traveling, Thinking*, eds. Craig Buckley and Pollyanna Rhee (New York: GSAPP Books, 2011), 233.

helm of *The Architect*, they produced a group of issues that spoke directly to their renewed ambitions and hope for the profession that arose from their time spent immersed in the energetic architecture culture of Britain. Duncan, White and Hill had returned to Perth with a renewed enthusiasm for the discipline, and they were keen to channel this into their own community. Taking advantage of a format that they knew well from their extensive experience in producing student publications, *The Architect* provided a perfect outlet for them to productively focus this energy and agitate for change. They used the journal as a platform to rally the local profession, calling for a renewed engagement with the built environment, and to strengthen the local architectural community and the level of critical discourse within it.

As this chapter has demonstrated, their editorial direction provides a unique lens through which to evaluate their time, and the experience of their peers, abroad. In their celebration of local projects, and continued calls for community engagement, it suggests that the working holiday was less about absorbing influence, but rather it was a decisive break from their career and lives in Perth which allowed time and space for reflection. It was a time that offered them a fresh perspective on their own architecture culture, and allowed them to reinforce the value and opportunities that existed there. Through the pages of *The Architect* they edited there is a palpable sense of excitement and enthusiasm for what the local architectural community could become. This likely came through their exposure to the London's vibrant architecture culture and, also their newfound appreciation for the possibilities and opportunities that were latent in their home city having a newfound critical distance with which to view it. Indeed, as seen in their engagement with contemporary British discourse, and their subsequent reformulation of the 'new brutalist' movement for their own specific circumstances, the graduates never lost sight of their home situation.

There is a hypothetical pattern of progression that one can chart through the activities of Duncan, White, and Hill which demonstrates how their time spent overseas on the working holiday filtered through into Perth's architecture culture upon their return. The experiences and encounters they had abroad were first tested and debated amongst themselves overseas, in their flats and on the journey home. Back home, the Shiralee provided a kind of a simulation of this environment in Perth – a casual forum which they could meet and continue these conversations within a broader cultural milieu. These ideas were then articulated, expressed, and funneled through the pages of *The Architect*, before they were absorbed into their own practices. Idealistic perhaps, but through

the identification of these two crucial nodes within the Perth architectural community, which were both developed explicitly out of the enthusiasm and renewed vigour their working holiday imparted upon them, they begin to sketch out the changing landscape of the Perth architectural scene which these returning graduates were instrumental in developing and the manner in which their recent experiences directly shaped the culture around them.

Chapter 4.3 Practice on Return

4.3.1 Introduction

> When I get back from Europe I shall spend some time going around the various big offices in London to pick up any points on office organisation etc.[626]

Written by Edwin Whitaker in a letter to his parents shortly before he returned home to Perth, this note highlights the keen attention the architects paid to their impending return home and the kind of knowledge they were looking to bring back with them. While the trip abroad offered a diverse range of experiences and opportunities, the realities of starting their careers in Perth was never far from their minds. Whitaker's interest in the organization of offices shows that as the Perth architects moved around the UK and across different offices and building tours, they were accumulating stores of information in preparation for their future back home. The focus was less on accumulating stores of formal language, but rather on acquiring design methodologies and attitudes towards practice. While The Shiralee coffee house and *The Architect* were central to fostering a robust and active local culture, the focus was always the aim of furthering the architecture of the city and improving the quality of the built environment.

This chapter looks at how the working holiday informed the developing architectural practice and design methodologies of those graduates upon their return to Perth, rather than identifying formal links with what they saw overseas.[627] The chapter demonstrates that the graduates returned with an expanded spectrum of knowledge that goes into the making of buildings. This included everything from the underlying discourse and the production of drawings to office structure, personnel, and management, client relationships, advocacy, design methodologies, and the construction of buildings. AS Whitaker's note shows, the interest was as much about organization and managerial strategies, as learning about design. However, given the paucity of practice records beyond drawings and photographs, and the limits of the oral histories conducted,

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[626] Letter from Edwin Whitaker to Richard and Lilian Whitaker, 8 March 1954. Private Collection, Claire Whitaker.

[627] Typically historiography has focused on the direct effect of travel on built form, where an architect would return home with a new vocabulary, sense of proportion, and colour palatte derived from new experiences. See: Benedetto Gravagnuolo, "From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture," in *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities,* eds. Jean-Francois Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino (New York: Routledge, 2010): 15-40.

how these more managerial aspects manifested in their practice is difficult to track, and so the focus here leans more on design methodologies and more practical aspects of practice.

Tracing the ephemeral transfer of influence and methodology into practice is a complex task, compounded by the enormous variety of experiences, and the lack of archival records which remain from those formative years of practice immediately after the architects returned to Perth. Rather than attempting to survey the wider scene and the work of all returning architects, this chapter focuses on the works of two prominent architects that were completed shortly after their return to Perth. Each body of work illustrates a different aspect of their practice which was fundamentally affected by their time abroad, aspects that were likely shared by many of their fellow returned travelers. It describes first the work of Ross Chisholm, for whom the time away offered a chance to challenge his own understandings of Perth and Australian architecture, returning with fresh eyes and the ability to see his city from a global perspective. This distance reconfigured his understanding of Perth, and he clearly adapted his own practice to reflect this shift and accommodate his renewed conception of his home city. Chisholm channeled these thoughts into an article written shortly after he returned entitled 'Perth in Retrospect' which is examined together with his first major built work, The Wesley College Chapel (1960).

The chapter then examines a more direct influence on an architectural practice through the work of John Duncan. Duncan returned to Perth with two key lessons from his time abroad. First was a design methodology developed during his time in the Goldfinger office, in which the use of a regulating modular grid dictated the planning of a building. Second, was Duncan's interest in the New Brutalism and the Smithsons, which informed his work both formally and ideologically. The chapter also examines briefly the work of Bill Weedon and Stuart Coll, and the administrative expertise with which they returned to Perth. The individual buildings that these architects produced when they returned to Perth are refined and sophisticated works, charged through with the experience they had abroad. But while these experiences are not easy to identify, or visible in the final result, it is evident that the experience of the working holiday forever changed the individual practices of those who went.

The narrow focus of this chapter is necessitated, not only for the large number and varied nature of buildings completed by returning graduates, but also due to the entirely disparate nature of the material and sources that documents their return. For many of the graduates, whose experiences have been highlighted over the previous chapters, the knowledge of their built work, and any

archive or material relating to it is virtually nonexistent. For most, there are no job books, no published records, and no photographs which remain. Much of what they built was private domestic work, and so very few publicly accessible records exist. An architect like John White never published his own work, never wrote about his own work, and has an archive that is fragmented at best and spread out across a number of private archives. To try and assess the effect on this trip on his, and others' work in any meaningful way remains difficult and beyond the scope of the thesis and so an examination of these broad effects, channeled through two leading practitioners, provides a framework through which the fragmented experience of others may be positioned in future studies.

4.3.2 Ross Chisholm and a Critical Reflection

In October 1958, Ross Chisholm returned to Perth following his second stint in London. He had first travelled there in 1954-56 with John Lidbury, before returning to Perth for a year, and then travelling back to London in 1957 with Ian Brackenridge. Chisholm had spent a further two years in London where he resumed his job with Chamberlin Powell and Bon, working on various schemes including the Golden Lane estate, the Barbican redevelopment and a number of schools. On this second trip, Chisholm met Elizabeth Box, from Melbourne, at a party in Earls Court and were married in September 1958. On the 6 September the couple returned to Perth, this time taking the unusual option to fly, and following an extended route as their honeymoon over the next month. They flew to Paris, to Brussels for Expo '58 and then onto Berlin where they visited the Olympic Stadium, Hugh Stubbins's Congress Hall and Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation. This was followed by stops in Venice, Rome, and then flying to Athens, Istanbul, Delhi, Bangkok before finally arriving in Perth on the 10 October.[628] Apart from his brief return to Perth in 1956, this meant he had effectively been away from Australia for almost five years. His time away was transformative, and he gained considerable practical experience as a senior assistant within the CPB office. But perhaps the most evident change in his practice upon his return to Perth was the different perspective that the time spent away afforded him, and one that he was keen to enact upon. Chisholm started work just three days after arriving home where he went into the family practice, Cameron, Chisholm and Nicol, having previously worked there on his year between London trips.

[628] Katrina Chisholm, Email Correspondence with Andrew Murray, 18 October 2021.

He was made a partner upon rejoining the firm, and, together with Gil Nicol, he would become the new young force behind the firm.

Chisholm wasted little time in re-engaging with the architectural community of Perth. A month after his return, on the 18 November, his diary records 'write article' - this would become an article entitled 'Perth in Retrospect' published in the December 1958 issue of *The Architect*.[629] Written from the vantage point of having been away from the city for more than five years, this three-page article, sees Chisholm attempt to reconcile his shifting attitude towards Perth, and the changes that had occurred during his lengthy absence. This is one of the few articles written by returning travelers that set out to critically evaluate their trip and it provides an extremely valuable insight into the minds of those who undertook the journey. Chisholm primarily uses the article to highlight a series of issues he identified with Perth and its development over the previous decade. These range from town planning errors, new suburban developments, and the overall declining quality of architecture across the city, which he attributes largely to the recent building boom that saw a construction frenzy drastically reshape the city in a short period of time. Chisholm clearly felt the profession had missed an opportunity to reshape the city, and to capitalize on the years of economic prosperity since he had left.

There is a clue to his thinking in the title: Perth can only be viewed 'in Retrospect' from a distance, and the article is framed as a response to a rhetorical question which Chisholm posed to himself: "Perhaps the one most pertinent question asked of all travellers returning home is: "Do you see a vast change in Perth?" and to which he replies: "I feel that it is perhaps appropriate at this stage to try and give an individual answer to the question that is constantly confronting us all."[630] Chisholm is frank in his assessment and puts forward a series of scathing statements in his reply:

> When we do look at the changes Perth has undergone in the past decade, it becomes increasingly more difficult to find worthwhile man-made improvements either to our natural environment or to Perth as it existed prior to this rapid growth… It would be interesting to look around us and ask ourselves just what quarters of our city are really worth retaining. With the expansion and

[629] Ross Chisholm personal diary, 1954. Private Collection, Katrina Chisholm; Katrina Chisholm, Email Correspondence with Andrew Murray, 18 October 2021.
[630] Ross Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," *The Architect* (December 1958): 25.

> development of the last few years, have we contributed more worthwhile buildings and spaces within our city to be retained by future generations?[631]

Chisholm's time in London and the urbanity that he experienced had a profound effect on him, and he was startled by the expansion of Perth's suburbs that were rapidly stretching out away from the central city. This was a view shaped both by an immersion in the new environment of London, and simultaneously, a distance from life in Perth. He notes:

> It is this wastage of land that is the most severe criticism any returning traveller could have of our country, especially if one is at all observant of how others on this earth must live off areas of land no bigger than the garden of some of our homes.[632]

The beauty of the natural landscape of Perth is repeatedly highlighted throughout the text, and it is clear that he had developed a renewed enthusiasm and respect for his local environment upon return. He positions an engagement and respect for the local landscape as being of vital importance to the success of the local profession, not only for its abundance of natural resources, but the beauty of the flora and the significance it might lend to developments. He writes, "we find man tending to desecrate our natural environment by this indiscriminate felling of trees and then almost with a pricking of conscience, to come along with the 'arboreal cabbage' trying to make amends."[633] He further points to policies in Europe which protect mature trees and particularly significant landscapes as a model to be examined for Perth. At the end of the article, which is generally focused on issues which have arisen from suburban expansion and a lack of respect for the natural landscape, Chisholm ends with an observation tangential to the receding article:

> One final impression I wish to comment on is the apparent reluctance to employ the modelled architectural façade. This has too often been supplanted by the flush glass wall both in commercial and domestic building. Having brilliant light and a clear, crisp atmosphere, one tends to think of Australia providing true examples of sculptural architecture rather than imitating a style of building provoked by harsher climes than ours, and these even under their drab conditions, do not provide the same excitement or interest so often apparent in a glossy magazine.

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[631] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 25.
[632] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 26.
[633] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 26.

> Traditional methods of building, both at home and abroad can, more often than not, provide us with some of the finest examples of detail architecture.[634]

Chisholm offset the article with a series of photos taken by him on his recent travels, highlighting qualities in architecture that he thought worth sharing. The images all illustrate the 'modelled façade' and 'detail architecture' qualities he outlines above and are accompanied by brief captions that elaborate on his selection. Chisholm includes images of St Mark's Square in Venice, "The perfect use of the square in civic design, coupled with fine architectural detail"; the Doge's Palace, "The sensitive use of the modelled façade"; Istanbul Hilton, "Modern architecture evolved from traditional principles of landscaping, planning and detailing" and finally the Cooper/Taber Seed factory in Essex designed by Chamberlin Powell and Bon while Chisholm was in the office, "Industrial architecture based on careful consideration of building technique and functional requirements."[635]

[634] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 26.
[635] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 27.

ST. MARK'S SQUARE–VENICE

The perfect use of the square in civic design, coupled with fine architectural detailing.

DOGES PALACE–VENICE

The sensitive use of the modelled facade.

ISTANBUL HILTON–TURKEY.

Modern architecture evolved from traditional principles of landscaping, planning and detailing.

COOPER/TABER SEED FACTORY–ENGLAND.

Industrial architecture based on careful consideration of building technique and functional requirements.

Photos–Ross Chisholm

THE ARCHITECT, DECEMBER, 1958—27

Fig 4.17 Images taken by Chisholm which accompany his article: Ross Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," *The Architect* (December 1958): 25-27.

4.3.3 The Tourist's Gaze

Together with the images, the article illustrates Chisholm's continual and practical engagement with different cultures and contexts as he traveled and makes visible the process of a young architect figuring out their own architectural values and beliefs. Further to this, it offers an insight into the critical process undertaken by these architects as they moved through the world - how they viewed themselves and their city having gone through this transformative journey. The articles put into words the constant dialogue the architects set up with Perth and their new environments, as they learnt, adjusted, and refigured their understanding of home, and expectations of architecture as they went. The frustrations, joys, and surprise of travelling are recorded: the immersive quality of the working holiday is writ large. Chisholm highlights the disappointment of seeing significant buildings in the flesh having previously only read about them from a distance. He notes the wild variations in the qualities of light and atmosphere between places, and the apparent absurdity of emulating architecture designed for those specific locations on the other side of the world. He demonstrates a newfound appreciation for the specific qualities of Perth, including its environment, climate, landscape and traditional building methods, which were only rendered visible through act of leaving.

The act of leaving, and the distance that it afforded him, provided a kind of critical filter to evaluate Perth as his understanding of the world expanded.[636] Ultimately, the article shows that Chisholm did not return with a series of new ideas to bring back or impose upon Perth, but rather returned with a heightened sense of place, open to the possibilities and opportunities inherent in his own backyard. This is an important aspect of Chisholm's reflections and one that would directly shape his architectural practice. Travel was not about bringing something new 'home', rather, it was about using time away to identify opportunities that already existed and to rethink a personal relationship with one's home context.

Chisholm's article is significant, in that it articulates a critical process that would have been widely experienced by the graduates, but rarely, if ever, recorded. This process of constructing an ongoing dialogue and reflection on home is central to the travelling experience, and with this

[636] The use of the phrase 'critical filter' is borrowed from: Goad, "Modernism and Australian Architecture: Part of the Critical Filter."

article Chisholm was able to document it. The retrospective view recalls tourism critic John Urry's identification of 'the gaze' in travel. Urry writes that travel "involve[s] the notion of 'departure', of a limited breaking with established routines and practices of everyday life and allowing one's senses to engage with a set of stimuli that contrast with the everyday and mundane. By considering the typical objects of the tourist gaze one can use these to make sense of elements of the wider society with which they are contrasted."[637] It was through this breaking of routine and critical distance which allowed Chisholm to evaluate and contrast his experiences overseas with those upon his return, and to see his home town with a fresh perspective.

The way that the article ends, with praise for the modelled façade and a dismissal of the 'flush glass wall', signals an approach for translating this new perspective into a productive architectural output. This 'final impression' provides a neat entry point through which follow his broader observations about place, landscape and missed opportunities within Perth and how they might translate into built form. Here, a direct link is made between his interest in local conditions, and a desire to capitalise on Perth's unique character and the inability of a particular strand of modern architecture to engage critically with place. Chisholm's position aligns him with a contemporary shift in modern architecture towards traditional building models, as frustration with modernisms restrictive syntax began to prove troublesome.[638] The inability for curtain walls to express ideas of place and the complexity of the modern condition that Chisholm identifies were widely acknowledged, and speaks directly to his experience within the CPB office, which was clearly interested in fine grain architectural detail and vernacular forms.[639] In this sense, the article ends with a kind of directive for his practice and his newly elevated role within CCN. For Chisholm, his time away afforded him time to interrogate what an appropriate architectural response for Perth would be. As laid out in the article, this would be one of more intense urbanity and contextual engagement, and would rely heavily on the use of a detailed, modelled façade, in order to create a

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[637] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze,* second edition (London: SAGE, 2002), 2.

[638] This can be seen in discourse which emerged from events like CIAM 6, and "In Search of A New Monumentality" symposium. See: Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 51-53; "In Search of A New Monumentality: A Symposium," *The Architectural Review* 104, no. 624(1948): 117-128.

[639] This interest is evident in the use of historic forms and heavy rustication in the Barbican project, but perhaps most clearly through a series of infamous Christmas Cards the office produced between 1960 and 1982 which featured striking black and white photographs of traditional architectural forms taken by the practice leaders.

built form that directly responded to the "brilliant light and a clear, crisp atmosphere"[640] he so valued on his return.

4.3.4 Distance in Practice

Shortly after Chisholm rejoined CCN, he was provided an opportunity to put these ideas into practice when he was awarded the commission for a new Memorial Chapel at Wesley College, a private boys school in South Perth. In 1959 the Old Wesley Collegians Association held a competition for a new chapel open to past students of the College. Eleven entries were submitted, and Chisholm was awarded first place.[641] This was his first major commission since rejoining the practice, and the competition format provided a perfect platform to test out the ideas he had been formulating while away. Designed to seat 270 students, he designed a circular drum-style chapel capped off with a pleated roof form and spire and placed in the centre of the square lychgate lawn, which was bordered on two sides by the original early 20th century school classroom block and dormitory block. In his decision to design a circular building, his competition text describes it as an intention to achieve the "integration of the architectural forms" which was "to be achieved by the simplicity and symmetry of a pure form, namely a circle, in imposing a primary relationship with the existing rectangular classroom block… The strength of the integration is founded on the theory that the form of the Chapel is acting as a direct complement to the existing building complex, and does not depend on the imitation of the existing form and architectural detail."[642] He later clarified that the circular form is one "so often proved through history as offering one of the most characteristic traditionally suitable ecclesiastical envelopes… to acknowledge the Vitruvian principles of design in a sympathetic and studied use of material enclosing the space."[643] Chisholm's use of the word detail and invocation of historical precedent here provides a clue to a dialogue he sets up with the reflection piece, and his ongoing preoccupation with modelled facades and traditional architectural forms.

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[640] Chisholm, "Perth in Retrospect," 26.
[641] *Cross-Section* 79 (May 1959).
[642] "Wesley Memorial Chapel – Winning Design," *The Architect* (June 1959) 26.
[643] "Wesley Memorial Chapel," 26.

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Fig 4.18 Wesley College Chapel, South Perth. Cameron Chisholm Nicol, 1960. Photographer: Fritz Kos. *Cross-Section* 105 (July 1961).

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Fig 4.19 Wesley College Chapel, South Perth. Cameron Chisholm Nicol, 1960. Aerial photograph of Wesley College, showing the position of the chapel. To the east is the classroom block, and northeast is the dormitory block. C1965, Landgate WA.

Opened in early 1961, the chapel was built almost exactly as submitted to the competition process and is a remarkably compact essay in ecclesiastical design. What is most striking about the building, particularly in light of Chisholm's reflection, is the intensely modelled façade and the material selection which can be seen to directly engage with the 'brilliant light' of Perth. The chapel consists of a series of alternating precast, tilt-up concrete panels, with each alternating panel slightly recessed to provide indirect glazing between the panels. The concrete panels used an exposed aggregate finish with large diorite stones and glass chips embedded producing a grey-coloured panel, the other finished in cream Tyrolean render. The rough surface sparkles in the sunlight with the glass chips designed to catch the light, while the recessed white plastered panels act as a relief and provide a textural difference. Above the recessed panels is the exposed brilliant white pained concrete ring beams that encircle the building and layered in front are gold coloured steel columns that run from the valleys of the roof, complete with a black sheath wrapped around each near the top. Projecting out from the roof line are the rainwater spouts which cascade water down in front of the columns. This presents a complex and layered façade that wraps around the building, and directly reflects Chisholm's interest in creating a highly 'modelled façade'. The pleated roof is sheathed in copper and sits above blue cathedral glass spandrel panels, allowing the roof to perch atop the solid concrete drum further adding to the complexity and depth of the composition.

Chisholm's choice of concrete aggregate panel in the chapel was not an unusual choice in itself. The material was relatively commonplace in Perth at the time, and CCN were particularly fond of using it at the time. But it is his intention in the material choice which is significant. When read together with his 'Retrospect' article, the deliberate nature of the material choice is revealed, made following an intense period of critical reflection abroad. At a purely formal level, there are stylistic or formal similarities with the kind of work Chisholm was engaged with at CPB during his time there. The use of aggregate panels was widespread in CPBs work at the time, and the use of pure geometry was a familiar motif in the practice from this time. To what level this was a learned and adapted syntax or simply an alignment of values is unclear. But what the chapel does clearly reveal is that the real effect that Chisholm's working holiday had on his practice was not in a learned formal language, but in its provision of a critical distance which enabled him to see Perth anew. The choice of materials, façade composition, and the siting of the chapel reflect Chisholm's renewed understanding and reconceptualization of Perth following his return. He was able to use

the chapel as a device to identify and exaggerate those qualities which he admired, highlighting qualities of place that without leaving, he might have otherwise been blind to see.

4.3.5 Panels and Factories

In the lead up to the Wesley College competition the CCN office had already been experimenting extensively with aggregate concrete panels in projects led by both Chisholm and Nicol, developed through a strong association with Concrete Industries, which supplied the panels.[644] These were a relatively new material in Western Australia, but their use steadily increased towards the end of the 1950s.[645] CCN had used aggregate panels in a number of projects in the years leading up to the chapel, including the John Barleycorn hotel and the Philips Electrical showroom and offices, led by Gil Nicol, along with the major new Metropolitan Transit Trust (MTT) Administration building and running depot.[646] Shortly after Chisholm returned, the firm was awarded the commission for a new warehouse and administration building in the Hilton Park industrial area for D&J Fowler, a wholesale grocery company started in South Australia which was known for the production and distribution of Lion branded goods.[647] At the same time that the 'Retrospect' article was published, an article about the factory was written in *The West Australian*. The text makes careful note of the precast concrete aggregate panels to be used, and their intended function:

> The saw-tooth roof outline will still be expressed but it will be softened by precast concrete wall panels with an exposed aggregate finish. Similar panels will be used on the roof facias of the administration and amenities buildings to assist in unifying the whole design. They will act also as a foil for trees in the landscaping… they will soften the profile and they will act as a sun screen to 2ft-deep windows…Precast concrete fins will act as screens against the setting sun.[648]

It is not clear how much, if any, input Chisholm had on the project as he had just returned to the practice, but in the framing of the materials use in the article, with the emphasis on the soft nature of the finish, their dialogue with landscape, and an interest in façade modulation, there are

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[644] Bill Weedon, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 6 April 2022.
[645] The panels were first used in Victoria in 1953 in the Melbourne Grammar Boat shed, and so were likely introduced to WA shortly after. See: Miles Lewis, *200 Years of Concrete in Australia* (North Sydney: Concrete Institute of Australia, 1988), 120.
[646] "Recent Work from the Office of Cameron, Chisholm & Nicol," *The Architect* (December 1960): 19-27.
[647] "Lion Plum Pudding," *Daily Herald,* November 25, 1913, 6.
[648] Frank Platell, "Factory Shows Imagination," *The West Australian,* December 6, 1958, 15.

strong parallels with Chisholm's view of Perth that he was formulating at the time. Given Nicol's interest in the panels at the same time it is likely that they had become the point of regular discussion in the office, and their potential as a contextually responsive material was a view widely held within the firm.

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Fig 4.20 D&J Fowler Factory perspective. Cameron Chisholm Nicol, 1960. "Factory Shows Imagination," *The West Australian,* December 6, 1958, 15.

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Fig 4.21 D&J Fowler Factory, O'Connor. Cameron Chisholm Nicol, 1960. SLWA, Aerial Surveys Australia collection, 266653PD.

While Chisholm's role in this building is unclear, the D&J Fowler warehouse provides a useful example of another kind of architectural engagement experienced by those graduates upon their return to Perth. The documentation and administration of the building was initially handled by Stuart Coll, who had recently joined the firm upon his return from the UK, having been part of the first class of graduates from PTC along with Nicol.[649] Coll had documented the building, but left part the way through to pursue opportunities at the Public Works Department where he had previously served his cadetship during his time at PTC.[650] At this point Bill Weedon, fresh from London, joined CCN. Having formed a close relationship with both Nicol and Chisholm, particularly having just worked with Chisholm together at CPB, the office provided an obvious and harmonious opportunity upon his return to Western Australia. Weedon's first task was to finish off the factory warehouse that Coll had begun. Weedon recalls the project:

> The first job I had to do was finishing a factory in Fremantle for D & J Fowler who were food manufacturers… That factory was documented by Stuart [Coll] and was in the process of being built and I had to look after the building of it. I had to do some detailed drawings of office cabinetry again, I did a lot of cabinet work. That was good, very instructive on learning building.[651]

Here, with Coll and Weedon's input, a different perspective is provided on the kind of practice the architects might more typically encounter upon returning to Perth. For Coll and Weedon, the factory provided a building onto which to apply the more practical skills and lessons learnt overseas, while coming to grips with the local construction industry, materials, and client relationships at a level they would not have experienced prior to leaving. But it also illustrates the typical path for returning graduates, and further underscores the difficulty in tracing particular influences. Weedon and Coll were part of a larger design process, contributing to the project at various stages of development. Contributing administrative and documentation expertise to the project, rather than sole authors of the design, means their individual efforts are difficult to identify. This was a typical experience for many graduates, who rarely had the opportunity to act as lead design architect on projects upon their return.

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[649] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.
[650] Stuart Coll jnr., letter to Andrew Murray, 11 March 2021.
[651] Bill Weedon, interview with Andrew Murray, 15 March, 2021, Albany, W.A.

The building was a relatively straight forward exercise in factory design, the kind of building which sustained large scale architectural practice in Perth at the time. In this sense, the building is significant not for its formal effect or civic presence, but rather in the administrative skill and considered understanding of the building process which underscores the project, which drew on both Coll and Weedon's extensive experience in the UK. Weedon's experience solving problems in the Golden Lane Estate can be seen to have directly contributed to the final solution of the Fowler warehouse. This is a technical ability that is hard to identify but is a key aspect of a transnational architectural process and it would have long term effects. Both Weedon and Coll would pursue this more technical aspect. Weedon remained with CCN as a senior partner until the end of the 1980s, where he was known as a problem solver, and led the technical arm of the firm, while Stuart Coll would remain with the PWD, first as district architect for the North West of WA, before becoming architect in charge of the General Drawing Office.[652] Clearly their experience in those large overseas offices provided them with considerable experience and ability in this aspect of design, and they were able to transfer this into their careers at home. While their experience on the working holiday is not directly visible in the buildings they produced, it fundamentally shaped their architectural approach and the buildings which they worked on.

Through the lens of the 'Retrospect' article, Chisolm was able to use his time away to evaluate particular qualities about Perth, both from a natural and a built environment perspective, which would provide a framework in which to inform his architectural approach. But this would also be one of the few pieces of writing that Chisholm would do, and so there is little other indication in his work of how else his time in the UK, and particularly his lengthy stint at CPB might have more directly affected his practice. Of course, working anywhere for half a decade, particularly at the beginning of a career, will have an effect, either directly or not, but it remains difficult to trace. Chisholm left behind an extensive drawing and practice archive, but without his insights, there is little in the way to assess the impact beyond speculation and formal comparisons.

4.3.6 John Duncan and Goldfinger

John Duncan returned to Perth, together with Ross Chisholm and John Lidbury on 30 January 1956. Shortly after his return, he entered into the family practice, where he was made a partner, joining his father Kenneth Duncan, John Mercer and Cyril Stephen. Duncan, Stephen and Mercer

[652] Stuart Coll jnr., letter to Andrew Murray, 11 March 2021.

(DSM) were a major commercial practice in Perth by this time, and in 1956 Ken Duncan was the President of the RAIA WA chapter, which afforded further recognition. DSM were architects for a number of major institutions including the WA Fire Brigade Board, Silver Chain nursing, and the Commonwealth Industrial Gases Limited in WA, and the firm had a steady flow of work across the state.[653] To this, Duncan would bring a number of residential projects for friends and colleagues, which would provide him with a steady stream of projects through which to work through the new design methodologies and ideas that he had encountered while in Britain. These small house projects afforded him more opportunity for experimentation and self expression than the larger institutional and industrial work that otherwise occupied the office.

Through his time on the editorial team of *The Architect*, self-published accounts, and oral histories, Duncan left a more direct trace of his time in the UK and its influence upon him. For Duncan, his time away was a pivotal moment in his career, and in oral history projects 30 years later he openly and eagerly discusses his time in the UK, recalling the trip with careful detail. While there were many facets of the trip that shaped Duncan's practice, this section examines two key influences that shaped Duncan's design methodology and architectural approach when he returned. These are his time in Goldfinger's office and his ongoing interest in the New Brutalism. Interestingly, Duncan provides the inverse of Chisholm's situation above, in that he wrote and spoke more freely about his architectural interests and approach but left few archival traces with which to compare them. The drawings of his practice DSM and photographs of his early projects have all but disappeared, particularly the work he completed when he first returned to Perth in the late 1950s. The few projects that have not been demolished have been altered beyond recognition, which leaves very little to work with, namely a handful of newspaper articles featuring his work and individual building archives held by clients.

4.3.7 Translating Goldfinger

While Chisholm brought home a new perspective on practice and Perth, Duncan returned with a more direct influence taken from his time at the Goldfinger office: a design methodology. The most obvious aspect of which was the use of a regulating, modular grid to control a design. In his interview with Jane Fleming, Duncan recalls certain design processes that he picked up during his

[653] John Taylor, "Kenneth Charles Duncan," Accessed 20 May, 2022, https://www.taylorarchitects.com.au/Biographies/KC%20Duncan%20for%20AIA%20(WA).pdf

18 months in Goldfinger's office, and makes a direct link between the way he would begin an architectural design in Western Australia:

> I had also become, through Goldfinger's office, very much addicted to designing on a module system. We used to work, because Englishmen were smaller, on a 2 foot 9 module. But it worked out very well, almost anything you wanted would fit on that…because he did so many of them, you had 5ft 6, 8 ft 3, 11ft, they were quite useful dimensions.[654]

This module spacing, Duncan explained, was designed to account for British door frame sizes, and so at home he simply adapted the module to fit Australian door sizes, which meant he ended up with a 3 foot module. He recalled: "For many years the first thing I would ever do is draw up my grid on the paper."[655]

Goldfinger's use of the 2 foot 9 grid during this period is well documented.[656] Originating partly from his training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Auguste Perret, Goldfinger first used the 2 foot 9 grid in his design for a house for Colonel Fletcher in 1947, and as James Dunnett and Nigel Hiscock write, this grid was "derived from the ergonomic dimensions of man, and it became the basis of most of his design afterwards."[657] In a reply to a critique by JM Richards in *AJ* of his Albemarle Street Office building, perhaps the project which used this regulating grid most explicitly, Goldfinger outlined this modular approach which he was then using as a basis for his architectural projects:

> Mr. Richards raises the question of the Golden Section. I design all my buildings on a proportion derived from the Square…and use a rigorous control of the elements of facades and plans. The plans are also controlled by a grid of 2 ft. 9 in. (giving 5ft. 6in., 8ft. 3in., 11ft., etc., as multiples and 1 ft. 10 in., 11in. or 3 in. increments). This gives me a control of scale.[658]

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[654] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[655] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[656] See: James Dunnett and Nigel Hiscock, "'To This Measure of Man': Proportional Design in the work of Erno Goldfinger," in *Twentieth Century Architecture and its histories,* ed. Louise Campbell (London: Society of Architectural Historian Great Britain, 2000): 87-124
[657] Dunnett and Hiscock, "To this measure of man," 102.
[658] Erno Goldfinger, "Criticism: The Architect replies," *The Architects' Journal* 126, no. 3256 (July 25, 1957): 133.

The Albemarle Street Office building was the main project that Duncan worked on during his time at the office, and the use of the grid was clearly a process that was impressed upon him while working on it. That Duncan could quickly list off the exact grid multiples in the interview almost thirty years after being in the office demonstrates how ingrained the system was for him, and speaks to the esteem with which he held both Goldfinger's approach, and the regulating grid.

Duncan's method of design, which he was able to now incorporate an approach directly learnt at the Goldfinger office, indicates not only his intensive engagement with the method of design as promulgated within the office, but the different kinds of office environments that graduates would encounter. For Duncan, working in an office which focused strongly on design method provided an opportunity to hone his design capabilities. Direct and close involvement with Goldfinger and the discussions that occurred within the practice meant that these sorts of ideological, or design interests could be easily picked up and learnt.

4.3.8 Applying the Grid

While there are precious few traces of Duncan's work that survive from his first few years in practice, particularly plans which would demonstrate the use of the grid, some evidence can be found. Mostly these are found in the weekly 'Architecture' section of *The West Australian* written by Frank Platell, which regularly published new houses and plans. One such example is a house designed in early 1960 for Count Bubna-Litic, an aristocrat who had fled Czechoslovakia following the Communist coup.[659] Platell, who was originally a motoring journalist, was often fed information directly by the architects and in the text that accompanies the project, Duncan's interest in the grid is made clear. Platell wrote, "The rafters have been spaced at 3ft. intervals so that standard-size plywood and asbestos-cement sheets could be used in the ceiling and rough joined over the rafters."[660] There is an accompanying plan which is complete with 3 ft. grid lines drawn clearly across the plan – unusual for any plans typically published in *The West Australian* at the time – and shows the grid clearly defining the major openings of the house, along with room sizes, stair placements and bathroom fixtures.[661] This is the only surviving document of this house, but Duncan's interest in the regulating grid, still being used four years after his return, is plain to see.

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[659] Frank Platell, "Architects Kept Costs Down," *The West Australian,* July 16, 1960, 19.
[660] Platell, "Architects Kept Costs Down," 19.
[661] Platell, "Architects Kept Costs Down," 19.

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Fig 4.22 Plan showing the 3ft grid. Bubna Litic House, Mt Claremont. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1960. "Architect Kept Cost Down," *The West Australian* July 16, 1960, 19.

A house designed for his close friend Arnold Potts in City Beach brings the grid directly in to the house as a design element. It was designed in 1957, one of the first projects he received upon his return, but construction was delayed and the house was not built until 1960.[662] Constructed in 16 weeks, the house presents a U-shape plan around a central courtyard, open to the north. With brick end walls, the house is predominantly timber framed with extensive window walls enclosing the space. While there is no surviving plan of the original house, contemporary photographs show how Duncan ran a 3 foot open timber grid across the living room as a kind of suspended ceiling, which directly lined up with the window wall frame to the north. This suspended grid was described in an article in *The West Australian*: "But here there is suspended an egg-crate screen of the blackbutt [wood] which was included to make a cosy and interesting section near the open fireplace."[663] Arnold's daughter Julie Potts recalled that Duncan described the use of this frame was intended to "create a more intimate feeling".[664] A further grid extends out as a pergola for the courtyard, which reads as an exposed roof frame. While the grid is less visible in the planning, the prominence of this grid in the house directly exposed as a design feature for a very close friend, demonstrates an early application of Duncan's interest in the controlling grid as a design method.

[662] Julie Potts, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 9 February, 2021.
[663] "Timber ceiling links living rooms," *The West Australian,* December 10, 1960, 26.
[664] Julie Potts, Telephone Communication with Andrew Murray, 9 February, 2021.

Fig 4.23 Potts House, City Beach. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1960. Private Collection, Julie Potts.

Fig 4.24 Potts House interior showing the exposed timber framed ceiling grid. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1960. Private Collection, Julie Potts.

Finally in his own house, designed for his family in 1963 in Teslin Road, City Beach, the grid continues to dictate the design decisions. Duncan wrote a kind of memoir in 2002 documenting the key details of the house, shortly before he passed away. The document outlines a number of guiding principles in the house, including the material choices and planning history, and it provides a direct insight into Duncan's design process. In it he recalls: "The design is based on a 100mm structural grid intervention between each set of 3 x 915 (3ft) planning grids, with 100sq concrete columns at 2850 centres. This control extends to the garden retaining walls and external paving, giving (we believe) a discernible sense of order and discipline, inside and out."[665] The walls of the house largely followed this grid, while the steel roof frame echoed the grid across the plan, with aluminium decking on top.[666]

[665] John Duncan "15 Teslin Road, Mt Claremont," (2002). Unpublished article provided to me by Beth Duncan in 2007. Private Collection, Andrew Murray.

[666] Whether Duncan's use of the grid was simply a rational approach to planning, or aligned more with Goldfinger's interest in the grid for its systematic 'control' together with a more abstract idea of 'geometric harmony', linking the 'human dimension' with construction logic, is unclear. See: Dunnett and Hiscock, "To this measure of man," 111, 119.

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Fig 4.25 Duncan House, Mt Claremont. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1963. Photographer: Fritz Kos. SLWA. BA 1595/10/821-2.

4.3.9 Duncan's New Brutalism

Duncan's use of the grid, and the acknowledgement of his own interpretation of a design methodology learnt while in the Goldfinger office provides a precise example of how design ideas circulate globally. Once in Perth, the grid was not uncritically applied, but rather it was overlaid and folded in with Duncan's other interests and methods, of which an interest in climate control was his primary other motivation.[667] In this sense, Duncan's use of the grid is not purely Goldfinger's. It is a hybrid method, translated and shifted for different contexts, overlaid with a range of other methods to create a project which sits across a complex knot of interests and approaches. Its application directly reflects the transnational movement of Duncan and his long-term immersion within a dynamic architecture culture that was not his own. Another of these hybrid approaches or methods that Duncan worked into his practice at the time was derived from his interest in the New Brutalism.

As seen in the last chapter, Duncan, together with John White and Lex Hill, had become interested in the New Brutalism movement as they encountered it in the UK, using it as a catalyst to spark a discussion over the future of the profession at home, played out through the pages of *The Architect*. While it is difficult to trace a continued interest in the movement for White and Hill beyond the editorial piece, for Duncan, the New Brutalism became a preoccupying interest of his and he would return to it throughout his career, which he noted in the oral history conducted with him in 1983.[668] Duncan's connection to the New Brutalism has been explored elsewhere in this thesis, [669] but some of his early works will be examined for their demonstration of Duncan's interpretation of New Brutalism as he applied it. For Duncan this interest manifested in a number of ways. On the one hand there was a formal interest, where the influence of Hunstanton and its honest expression of materials and construction, are made obvious. But there is also an interest in prefabrication, in structural systems, and a directness in approach which aligns with the idea of 'authenticity' espoused by the Smithsons and Theo Crosby in the first phase of the movement before Banham became involved.[670]

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[667] John Duncan "15 Teslin Road, Mt Claremont," (2002); Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[668] Fleming, Interview with John Duncan, 1983.
[669] Also see: Murray, "Brutal Beginnings," 2021.
[670] Crosby, Smithson, and Smithson, "The New Brutalism," 1.

Alongside the house projects for friends, one of Duncan's first major projects that he was awarded on his return that demonstrated his engagement with the movement came in 1956 for the Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre in South Perth. In 1956, The Alexandra Home for Women, an early parenting organization, moved from their North Perth home to a new site in South Perth where they were able to significantly expand operations. Here, the centre was transformed into the Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre which offered an expanded range of services including the training and registration of mothercraft nurses, and the issuing of infant health certificates.[671] The new Ngal-a building was a major undertaking, providing live-in accommodation for nurses and families, along with extensive care facilities.[672] This was a rare opportunity for a young graduate architect to design a major institutional building relatively soon after returning to Perth, and offered a chance to exercise the skills he had developed in Britain, working on schools, and large commercial projects.

Duncan Stephen and Mercer received the commission for the project through John Duncan's mother, Helen Duncan who was then the vice-president of the centre and oversaw its transition to the new site in South Perth.[673] John Duncan was assigned as the architect in charge, and oversaw the project to completion. Designed in 1956 and completed in 1959, the building was situated on the edge of the expansive Collier Pine plantation forest and the site retained much of the existing vegetation, the building nestled into the forest. The building comprised a long linear block which ran north-south, with four fingers branching off this central block, ranging between two and three storeys in height.

[671] Elaine Bennett, Selma Alliex, Caroline Bulsara, "The Nursing history of Ngala since 1890: An early parenting organization in Western Australia," *Australian Journal of Child and Family Health Nursing* 16, no. 1 (2019): 27-28.
[672] *Three Score Years and Ten,* pamphlet produced for the 70th Anniversary of Ngal-a. Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Records, State Library of Western Australia, 6093a/144
[673] "On the Occasion of Conferring Life Membership on Mrs. Helen Duncan, 26th September 1972," Draft of speech. Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Records, State Library of Western Australia, 6093a/64.

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Fig 4.26 Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre, South Perth. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1959. WestPix.

Fig. 4.27 Model of the Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre, South Perth. Duncan Stephen Mercer, 1959. *Cross-Section* 64 (February 1958).

The building wore Duncan's interest in Hunstanton clearly on its sleeve. It took advantage of Perth's strong steel industry and was designed around an exposed steel frame system with alternating timber framed infill windows and brick panels.[674] Into the steel framework a number of prefabricated elements were inserted including precast suspended slab floors, and Vermiculite-filled plaster wall panels which were intended to fit together 'dry' with the timber window mullions.[675] The modular steel frames were painted charcoal black and offset by white painted timber window frames - just like at Hunstanton - with the gutters and rain water pipes painted signal red.[676] Duncan described the building in a letter to Goldfinger, where he makes careful reference to his use of the module:

> We have had plenty of work here since I came back – the most interesting job being a new Home for children, babies, training in mothercraft etc. etc. costing approx. £A 175,000, say £90,000 sterling, - exposed R.S.J. framing with infill timber window units or brick panels. All very basic materials as the alternatives don't exist. Australian standard doors are 2'8" wide with timber frames and hence the module is 2'11.5" instead of 2'9" ![677]

The building was never published in the architectural press, either contemporaneously or retrospectively, and there is little information regarding its construction in the Ngal-a archives. Only partial early sketch plans of the building remain.[678] There is also only a handful of period photos which document the now demolished building. This makes tracing its development and the precise nature of its construction difficult. But in its use of prefabricated materials, the exposed steel frame, and formal nod to Hunstanton, the interest in the New Brutalism and the work of the Smithsons as he encountered it in the UK is plainly evident. With Ngal-a, Duncan can be seen as working through the ideas of New Brutalism, using the project as an opportunity to test out various ideas and expressions. Duncan was grappling with the ideological aspects of the movement, as outlined in the editorial, while still exploring an interest in the aesthetic expression

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[674] Taylor, 'John Kenneth Duncan."
[675] Duncan, Stephen, Mercer, Tender letter for Ngala (Alexandra Home), 4 September 1957. Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Records, State Library of Western Australia, 6093a/114.
[676] Duncan, Stephen, Mercer, Tender letter for Ngala.
[677] John Duncan, Letter to Erno Goldfinger, 20 February 1957. The Erno Goldfinger Papers, RIBA Collections, GolEr/268/4.
[678] See: Various drawings, Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Records, State Library of Western Australia, 6093A/113.The construction was mentioned briefly in Cross-Section, and a photo of a model was published. *Cross-Section* 64(December 1958).

of the Smithsons. Interestingly, this was the first and last major building designed by Duncan that employed this language, and the use of steel framing disappeared from his later work. He continued to refine his own architectural approach which became increasingly informed by the local construction industry and the use of concrete block would soon become prevalent in his work. The aesthetic interest in Hunstanton was dropped, but he would continue to draw on the ideas of the Smithsons as a framework which would inform the design process.

This is evident in his own house, which was designed roughly five years after Ngal-a. Formally different to Ngal-a, the house uses a system of precast concrete panels with an exposed aggregate finish, concrete columns, and chocolate brown brick floors all aligned along the aforementioned grid derived from Goldfinger. Jarrah-framed glazing panels complete the composition, topped off by a remarkably thin steel framed and aluminium decked roof without gutters. An acknowledgement of the climate and solar diagrams are evident in the house through the use of shading devices, which were entirely absent at Ngal-a, and it demonstrates Duncan's personal growth as an architect. While the house doesn't look to the Smithsons for formal inspiration, his memoir makes a direct link to the influence of their words on the design. Under the heading 'Style' he writes:

> The 1950's and 60's were a time when the word and concept of "style" was anathema to architects. The design, construction and materials spoke for themselves. We used the term 'the new Brutalism'. It is, of course, not brutal – here, the steel, exposed aggregate concrete, bagged brick walls, brick flooring, lack of gutters, clear timber finishes, exposed aluminium curtain and sliding door tracks, no cornices, minimal skirtings, combine to say, 'This is what we are – appreciate us for that.'[679]

The New Brutalism provided Duncan with a flexible set of ideologies and motivations, onto which he could graft his own interests and external developments, often dictated by the construction industry, thereby developing a dynamic architectural approach. As noted in the 2002 note on the house, his interests had become more clearly defined: the house reflected an interest in using materials in their natural state, along with an emphasis on showcasing the prefabricated systems

[679] John Duncan "15 Teslin Road, Mt Claremont," (2002).

and technical elements within a modular system, drawing on both Goldfinger's grid, and the embrace of new structural systems as outlined in the New Brutalist editorial in *The Architect*.

From this point on, Duncan's career, like Chisholm's, became increasingly busy as he was absorbed into the running of a major commercial practice, which continued to grow into the 1960s. The trajectory of his ideas, and architectural approaches become difficult to track, particularly given the lack of archival material. It is not until the 1980s that he starts to reflectively discuss his career, through various oral history projects. This means for much of the 1960s and 1970s, when DSM were at their most successful, there is little material to assess. But as these early projects show, Duncan's first years of practice in Perth were directly influenced by his experience on the working holiday, and he brought back a series of ideas, methodologies, and architectural approaches with which he would experiment and refine as his practice developed.

4.3.10 Conclusion

Through examining a range of responses - Chisholm's critical perspective, Duncan's design methodology, Weedon and Coll's administrative nous, and even Whitaker's interest in office management – this chapter has produced a kind of loose framework which can situate the multiple and profound effects the working holiday had on the individual practices of those returning travelers. In turn, it has highlighted the effect the working holiday had on the architectural profession and the built environment of Western Australia. Without the ability to describe each individual response, these experiences provide an understanding of how one might view the impact of the working holiday more broadly on the local profession. The time that the architects spent away from Perth produced a range of responses that were the result of long and intimate engagements with a variety of stimulating and challenging contexts. This framework enables going beyond identifying a shared formal vocabulary, and instead aims to reflect the overlapping, messy and deeply embedded transformation that occurred during their time spent away from home which would have long lasting, and ongoing effects for their own architectural practices.

As this chapter has shown, the duration and immersive nature of the working holiday meant that architectural ideas were not briefly encountered but lived, which had the ability to profoundly affect the individuals that experienced this journey. The motivation behind opening The Shiralee, the editing *The Architect,* and the making of an architectural practice, were the result of sustained

engagement with a different culture and the attendant perspective this time away from home afforded. The complete immersion of these architects in the British profession over a period of years, meant that the effect on their own architectural practice was less of a revelation, and more of a continually built up and shifting position, informed by a multitude of factors in which ideas were constantly being "negotiated, selectively borrowed, partially adapted or rejected."[680] While Duncan was learning the Goldfinger method he was simultaneously exploring ideas of the New Brutalism and the Smithsons, debating them in the flat or the pub with Whitaker, White, Hill and others. Likewise, Chisholm's new retrospective view of Perth was the result of an ongoing, dynamic personal dialogue over a period of five years, discussed and tested within the office, over a coffee or a pint.

When I asked Gus Ferguson what skills he thought he had returned to Perth with in 1960, having spent 18 months working for CPB on the Barbican project, he simply replied "I lost all my fear of big jobs."[681] In the time he spent working on projects at a scale and complexity far beyond anything in Perth at the time, Ferguson had gained a confidence in his own ability which he was able to carry into his own practice. This was a confidence, forged in the unfamiliar atmosphere of the UK, and transferred directly to his practice in Perth. Although impossible to formally identify in his buildings, this confidence would define and shape his practice as he re-engaged with Perth and the local profession. For many of those that returned it was this more ephemeral, pragmatic transferal of skill which more directly shaped their practice. These were skills and approaches which would fundamentally transform their approach to architecture and stayed with them far beyond any fleeting interests in particular architectural styles or materials. Combined with the alternative perspective on Perth that the trip offered, this meant an almost total transformation of their individual architectural approach. This transformation would underscore much of the architecture produced in Western Australia well into the twentieth century as those travelers continued to expand their practices, taking ever more senior roles within the profession, and as more graduates continued the tradition of the working holiday. Importantly, this was a transformation which occurred not just while working in the UK, but a shift which occurred

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[680] This phrase is taken from: Tom Avermaete and Cathelijne Nuijsink, "Architectural Contact Zones: Another Way to Write Global Histories of the Post-War Period?" *Architectural Theory Review* 25, no. 3 (2021): 350-361. It provides further discussion on the way ideas are exchanged, negotiated and reformed within an international context, and informed the writing of this chapter, although their focus is on brief moments of encounter like conferences, competitions and summer schools.
[681] Murray, "A Search for Understanding," 63.

incrementally on the boat ride over, in the drawing rooms of UK offices, in the car rides across Europe, the pubs of Earl's Court, and scootering across India.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 The Cycle Continues

This thesis has examined specifically the working holiday undertaken by Western Australian architects as it unfolded in the 1950s, building upon the foundation laid by a small, but influential group of travelers who first blazed the path in the interwar years. Although this study concludes at the end of the 1950s, this does not align with the end of the working holiday as a phenomenon. Instead, the 1950s should be viewed as the formative period for the trip when the experience was codified, connections were established, and the journey became part of the expected education of all architects in Western Australia. This was when the trip became known colloquially as the 'sixth year' of the course.[682] In the 1960s the number of students heading to the UK to pursue adventure and work experience increased, in line with rising student numbers due to the continued success of the PTC course, and the newly formed university course at the University of Western Australia which began in 1966. As the number of travellers increased, so too did the options for the working holiday. The 1960s saw the widening of horizons, with people travelling and working in the USA, Canada, Europe, and Japan. But overwhelmingly, London and the UK remained the leading choice.

While sailing remained the most route, flying became a viable alternative during this period. Students also continued to seek out ways to delay their arrival in London. More groups took the opportunity to drive part the way, and soon taking the 'hippy trail' or 'the overland' across became a popular choice among students.[683] Where the working holiday had typically been two years in the 1950s, by the 1960s it was increasingly done in three, four, or five years stints. Group travel also gained in popularity, and key journeys entered the folklore of Perth architecture. In February 1962, Bob and Kate Gare, Ralph and Heather Drexel, Beresford 'Binky' Collins, and Barry Cameron drove from Perth to England together in a Kombi van following the hippy trail. Together, they spent six months in the Kombi, starting out in India, heading across to Pakistan, up through the Khyber Pass to Afghanistan, then Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, Belgium before finally arriving in London.[684] A high profile journey, this set the tone for increasingly long and adventurous journeys across the globe. In April 1963 Colin Moore, having travelled to Naples by boat with fellow students Geoff Harveson and John Rowney, travelled up to Switzerland where

[682] Conversation with Gus Ferguson.
[683] See: Rory MacLean, *Magic Bus: On the Hippie Trail from Istanbul to India* (London: Viking, 2006).
[684] Robert Gare, letter to Andrew Murray, 17 February, 2022.

he bought a bicycle and spent 5 months cycling along the Rhine River up to the Netherlands before heading to London.[685] Around the same time, Walter Hunter drove from Melbourne to London with his wife Janet, and another architect from Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, travelling together in a vintage Ford Model A, where they also took six months following the hippy trail, starting out from Madras.[686] London also became a stop over in a longer trip, with students heading there to work for a period before travelling on to Canada and the US, working all along the way.

Women architects were conspicuously absent from the working holiday in the 1950s, after the early trail blazed by Dorothea Hancock, Margaret Feilman, and Jeannette Rae. Despite the increased presence of women in the PTC course, they continued to be absent from the working holiday into 1960s.[687] One of those who did make the journey was Margot Smalpage, the first woman to graduate from the PTC course in 1960. Smalpage travelled together with her husband and fellow PTC graduate Ian Watson, having met at PTC, and they provide a rare example of a husband and wife undertaking the working holiday together. They spent three years in London, Watson working at Howard Lobb while Smalpage worked in the office of Bryan and Norman Westwood together with ex-Perth architect Eric Leach who was then an associate partner of the practice.[688]

Throughout the 1960s architects from Western Australia continued to work as assistants on leading projects across the UK, and they soon found themselves stationed in the international offices of British based multi-national firms, particularly in the Gulf states. One example was Ralph Drexel, who found work with Farmer and Dark, where he was sent out to their Aden office in Yemen and spent three years working on the Little Aden project. The reputation laid down by those who had travelled and worked in the 1950s continued to have an effect, and Australian workers continued to be sought after and valued for their work ethic and contributions to office culture. In line with this, architects from Perth found themselves in increasingly interesting, smaller, and diverse firms, and with more responsibilities and status. Rob Kornweibel joined the newly formed office of Neylan and Ungless as one of the first employees, and he spent three years as the assistant in charge on the Linden Grove project. Kornweibel had got the job through an

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[685] Colin Moore, Interview with Andrew Murray, 10 March, 2021.
[686] Walter Hunter, Interview with Andrew Murray, 3 January, 2019.
[687] Women who studied at PTC in the late 1950s and 1960s included Gwen Ewens, Oline Hall, June Thong, Joanna Ferguson-Stewart, Edith Thompson, Frances Lyon, and June Lyon. Wendy Mickle and Dorothy Sadler were other key Association members in the 1950s.
[688] Ian Watson, email correspondence with Andrew Murray, 12 March, 2022.

important Australian connection – Gus Ferguson, who worked with Neylan at CPB and drove home together. Ferguson was a close friend of Kornweibel and suggested he get in touch with Neylan when he arrived.[689]

While CPB was the leading office destination of the 1950s for Perth architects, by the 1960s, it had become Architects Co-Partnership (ACP). The first to work there was Douglas Stuart in 1959, but was followed quickly by Robert Gare, Colin Moore, Walter Hunter, Beresford 'Binky' Collins, and Daryl Way. Together they worked on many of the firm's major buildings from that period. Gare spent three years as the lead assistant under Richard Raines on the Dunelm House project in Durham, and Walter Hunter spent 18 months on the Physics building at the University of Hull, along with projects in Newcastle. Moore left ACP and went to Arup and Associates where he then spent 18 months as site architect for the Mining and Metallurgy building at Birmingham University, working closely with Philip Dowson.

During this time the strong connection fostered through the student association continued to shape the journey. The travelling Western Australians shared flats together, found each other work, and the AA remained the first stop and primary contact. The chains of employment with certain firms continued, with one student replacing another or acting on recommendations from fellow Association members. Following the goodwill set down by John Duncan, a steady stream of PTC graduates went through the doors of Erno Goldfinger including Robert Allan and Ian Molyneux. Another example was Jonathan Pidgeon who worked for Hammett and Naughton, and arranged for Geoffrey Harveson to fill his position once he left. Key people continued to be central pillars within the network. Robert Gare was a particularly important node in this period. He encouraged others to join him at ACP, while he and his wife Kate hosted arriving friends like Colin Moore, John Rowney and Geoff Harveson.

Graduate architects from Western Australia continue to head to London, seeking adventure and work experience, before returning to Perth with different perspectives, experience, and skills that continue to shape the built environment and discourse of Perth. While the path was traversed well into the twenty first century, it is clear that at some point between the late 1960s and early 1970s that the nature of the working holiday shifted dramatically. Largely this corresponded with the rise of air travel. Agnieszka Sobocinska and Richard White have written of this shift more generally in

[689] Rob Kornweibel, interview with Andrew Murray, 8 June, 2021. Cottesloe, WA.

Australian travel, and their observations hold true for the architectural working holiday. They write, "The shift from ship to plane robbed the journey of weeks of anticipation and reflection… the feeling of distinction – of having arrived, both economically and culturally – was diluted further by the presence of so many other tourists."[690] While architects would continue to travel, it is clear that with this shift, the motivations, aspirations, and immersion in another culture changed and the working holiday transformed into a related, but distinct phenomenon. The sense of cooperative spirit and the visible cohort disappeared from the journey, and was instead replaced by singular travel, to increasingly dispersed locations as the strong community built up by the student association fractured.

5.2 Overview and Conclusions

This thesis set out to examine the nature of the working holiday as undertaken by Western Australian architects. It documented the phenomenon of the working holiday as it developed in the early 1950s and presented detailed accounts of the lived experiences from key members of the cohort who set out to live and work in the UK. It developed a novel methodology, adopting a group biography approach and using tools like oral history, life writing sources, and personal archives, to produce the first detailed account of the working holiday and its impact on architecture culture, both in Australia and in Britain. The working holiday, as it was experienced in the 1950s in Western Australia, provided an intellectual stimulus which would inform the architectural practice of many of the state's leading architects well into their careers, and helped to create a robust culture that supported this practice. The trip would provide those travelling architects a crucial break from their lives in Perth, and they returned with an expanded perspective on both life and architecture, and a renewed engagement with their own city.

As identified in the literature review, the working holiday remains a conspicuous omission in the literature on both Australian and New Zealand architectural history. This is despite it being a phenomenon that was widely experienced in both countries throughout the twentieth century and one that has continued to play a central role in the development of a local architecture culture. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the absence of the journey in the scholarship is not a reflection of the significance or the popularity of the trip, but rather of the historiographic focus in

[690] Agnieszka Sobocinska and Richard White, "Travel and Connections," in *The Cambridge History of Australia, volume 2,* eds. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 488.

Australasia which has prioritized the study of buildings, professional debates, and place-bound histories.[691] As the first in-depth study of the working holiday, this thesis has shown the long reaching implications of this journey both for the physical built environment, and for understanding the intellectual framework and discursive environment which had a direct effect on postwar Australian architecture culture. The details, itineraries, and experiences differ from state to state, and decade to decade. But as a phenomenon, this study has identified the working holiday as having considerable and far-reaching value as a site for future research in Australian architectural history.

This study has shown that the working holiday to the UK was a widely experienced phenomenon in Western Australia, with more than a third of PTC graduates, along with other members of the Student Association, making the journey to Britain in the 1950s. This was a trend which would continue well into the 1970s and occurred in similar numbers across Australia and New Zealand.[692] Further, the working holiday was identified as a specific Antipodean tradition which began in the interwar years, but accelerated dramatically in the immediate postwar years. It was a phenomenon with loose, but clearly identifiable characteristics, and differed slightly from state to state. A definition of the working holiday as experienced in WA was produced, which provided a framework through which to understand the phenomena more generally. It is defined as a return trip taken after formal study or registration, which typically spanned between 1-3 years. It was a journey often done in pairs or as a group, with the twin objectives of both working and travelling carrying almost equal weight. While destinations and routes varied, overwhelmingly the UK, and London, was the most popular destination.

Having situated the idea of the working holiday within the literature of both architectural travel and the 'Australian abroad', Chapter 2.3 identified a series of key institutional bodies and people that laid the foundations for the working holiday in the interwar period. It showed that the working holiday was initially borne out of frustration regarding the lack of progress in formalizing a professional architectural course and generally poor standard of education in the state. The main focus of the chapter was documenting the formation of the student group, the Architectural Association of Western Australia, which was originally aligned with its parent organization, The

[691] Andrew Leach, "Review: Australia: Modern Architectures in History by Harry Margalit" *Journal of the society of Architectural Historians,* 80, 1 (2021), 118-119.
[692] There is still much work to be done to produce comparable data from around the country, but it is clear that it was a popular and widely experienced phenomenon across Australasia.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects WA Chapter, and which would prove hugely influential in the establishment and continued success of the working holiday. It located people like Desmond Sands, Dorothea Hancock and Mervyn Parry, key members of the Association, as early proponents of the trip who were the first architects to travel to London in the 1930s to further their own careers and education.

In Chapter 3 the precise nature of the working holiday in the 1950s was described, a period which saw it essentially institutionalized through the hard work and determination of the increasingly independent student Association. It identified the key routes, itineraries, and lived experience of those who undertook the journey. It identified the major practices, projects worked on, and the significance of the Architectural Association in Bedford Square which facilitated the ongoing success of the trip by acting as an employment centre and cultural hub for the arriving students. The success of the journey was also underscored by the travelling students' position as British subjects and members of the Commonwealth which allowed for easy passage and unrestricted work rights once in the UK. The influence of the Commonwealth was further revealed in the broader social milieu which the Perth architects traveled and moved within. They were joined by architects from Sydney and an enormous number of women from WA, all centred around the emerging Australian hub of SW5, Earl's Court. Together they formed a loose, but identifiable group of young Australians in London, acting as a fluid network which experienced the modernity of the city together. This group would have a decisive impact on Perth when they returned, bringing with them a shared enthusiasm for the city and modern life.

The research established clear links between the working holiday and the architecture culture and built environment of Perth. It has shown that the trip had a profound and lasting influence on those who experienced it, but also on the wider culture of Perth. In Chapter 4.1, an engagement with the emerging cosmopolitanism of postwar London led to Barbara and Lex Hill looking to recreate the feeling back home. Creating a cosmopolitan enclave within the city, The Shiralee Coffee House was where their friends and other like-minded individuals could gather. A cosmopolitan enclave in the centre of the city, it fostered a new engagement with Perth and it patronized by the enormous number of returning travelers seeking to continue their interest in modern urbanity and recreating the atmosphere of London back home. As the first modern espresso shop in Perth, serving coffee late into the evening, the Shiralee was a product of the working holiday, one that made a significant contribution to Perth's broader cultural development.

Adopted as the 'architects' café' it soon became a hub for the student association and played a pivotal role in the development of local architecture culture as a place where discourse could freely unfold.

In Chapter 4.2, an engagement with the contemporary British architectural scene which renewed an enthusiasm for discourse and engagement was identified as a catalyst which John Duncan, John White, and Lex Hill then funnelled into their tenure as editors of *The Architect*. For two years, the trio used the journal to explicitly cultivate a local culture and discourse, which was in large part driven by their immersion in the active British scene, and the enthusiasm for an active and engaged profession which this instilled within them. They returned with an interest in building an active and discursive architectural community, of which they saw the journal playing an integral part. Together, the opening of the Shiralee, and the editorial efforts of White, Duncan, and Hill played a major role in the transformation of Perth architecture culture which occurred in the late 1950s. Chapters 4.1 and 4.2 both demonstrate that much of this transformation was driven by the efforts of a small handful of returning travelers, who re-entered the profession with a renewed focus and energy and rapidly sought out avenues to channel this energy.

Finally, in Chapter 4.3, the influence that the trip had on architectural practice was examined. It highlighted not just the explicit transfer of ideas – in the case of Duncan returning to Perth with a design methodology from the Goldfinger office – but also the more abstract effect that time and distance away from their home context had on practice. The time spent away from home offered the architects a critical distance that was able to shift their own understanding and relationship with their home city. This distance and time spent away ensured that the architects returned with a fresh perspective and a more globally informed view of their city. Architects like Ross Chisholm were able to transform their architectural vocabulary in an effort to directly respond to their renewed understanding of place, and it set them on an exploratory path to examine how to best use materials, form, and space to enhance and reinforce their understanding of Perth. The architecture they produced, and the practices they built, endeavoured to engage with this renewed understanding of place.

In summary, this thesis has shown the cultural significance and lasting effect that the working holiday had across the Australian architectural profession, Perth city, and on an individual's life and career. The working holiday was taken at a formative stage – poised between the carefree life of a student and the responsibilities of a professional career – and had the power to evoke a

powerful and deeply personal response in those who went. It was, as this thesis has shown, an awakening both architecturally, but also personally. It would prove to be a pivotal experience. For many this was the first time seeing beyond the familiarity and the small confines of Perth and its surrounding towns. It was the first time away from their family, from their friends, and the tight-knit community from which they had grown up in. It was an immersive trip, shared between friends and associates at close quarters over a considerable period of time. While impossible to convey the range of personal experiences and revelations the trip enabled, this thesis has canvassed a range of responses as a way of highlighting the significance of the journey, and provided a framework to understand it's effect beyond a formal transfer of ideas. For some the journey showed them what Perth was missing – be it a coffee shop or an engagement with place, or an active architectural discourse. For others it was an education in metropolitan architectural practice, and a time to absorb as much culture, both architecturally and otherwise, as possible. But it was also simply a means to get away, to see something different, and to seek out new experiences.

5.3 Significance and Contribution to the Field

This study has addressed a major gap in Australian architectural history, through its documentation of the working holiday and in providing a framework through which further studies of this phenomenon may be conducted. Although widely mentioned within the literature on Australian architecture, the significance of this phenomenon has yet to be recognized within the field. This is an oversight this thesis makes a major contribution towards redressing. It has demonstrated that the working holiday was not simply a pause in someone's career, as it has typically been framed, but rather a defining moment in their life when meaningful relationships were formed, and crucial networks developed between the end of formal study, and the commencement of an architectural career. This thesis has found that the working holiday was a defining aspect of Australian and New Zealand architecture culture in the decades which followed World War II and was experienced by an enormous number of architectural graduates from across the two countries. In particular, it found that the working holiday constitutes an essential aspect of the architectural profession in Western Australia, and one that is woven into the very fabric of practice in Perth.

The transformational power of the working holiday which emerged through this research offers a new perspective through which to observe the development of architecture culture in Australia.

Given the longue durée of the journey, and the complete immersion in another culture that it provided, the working holiday provided an experience that would fundamentally alter the participant's point of view. The journey provided space for reflection and growth outside of Australia and was an experience shared by an unusually large cross section of the profession, and in this instance, together in the one major city. Through an examination of the experiences, encounters, and shifting perspectives that the journey afforded those who went, an understanding of the working holiday can shed new light on the development of particular architecture cultures across Australasia and the direct impact it had on the shaping of architectural practices, discursive formations, and professional debates.

As shown here, the working holiday played a major role in the making of a local architecture culture in Perth, and it was organised through channels outside the typical professional boundaries. In Western Australia, the working holiday was an autonomous, student-led directive, which occurred beyond the remit of the Institute, and involved a complex overlap of personal and professional networks. In this sense, the working holiday is a site which provides the impetus for future studies to look beyond professional boundaries to identify other spaces of potential significance in discursive formations. By demonstrating the lasting influence that this student led directive had on the architectural profession in Perth, the study opens up the potential latent in other overlooked sites which sit firmly outside the discipline's border.

The working holiday stands as a uniquely shared experience within architectural practice. While space is shared in classrooms, the office, and after-work drinks, the intensity of the working holiday provided a shared experience with little parallel in the architectural profession. It brought these architects together in the one space, where their lives intertwined for a long period of time. This was an experience shared between not just architects, but a broad group of culturally aware and enthusiastic young people, particularly those upwardly mobile women who travelled to London in large groups. This led to a host of meaningful and enduring relationships that were formed abroad that would continue to cast influence over the profession and the broader culture within Perth for decades to come. The working holiday provided an opportunity to work and travel together, experiencing architecture and global culture at the same time, sharing new discoveries, chance encounters, observations, and frustrations. It was also an intensely personal time, and those that went were witness to proposals, marriages, the arrival of children, success and heartbreak experienced together in the close confines of a life abroad. Life and architecture

became inseparable on the journey, and this intertwined relationship continued back home, and these relationships were woven into their practice. Through the acknowledgement of this uniquely shared experience, it makes a major contribution to the understanding of the architectural profession in Perth and this communal experience which lies at its heart. It provides an in-depth account of a regionally specific discourse and offers a way to understand architectural practice in Perth on its own terms.

Although this is a study of a tradition which played out within city peripheral to a central discourse, it has clear implications for the global history of architecture. It shows simultaneously the wealth of international experience which runs through the Australian profession, and the entanglement of Australian architects in the global profession. It is this second point which is perhaps the most significant. In identifying a specific and novel form of architectural travel, this thesis has uncovered an entire network of settler colonial architectural assistants working together in the metropolitan centre. Old Imperial lines are retread for the direct benefit of Britain and its postwar reconstruction. The identification of this network of assistants opens a whole series of historiographic challenges and questions around authorship, labour forces, knowledge transfer, the continued legacy of empire, and the ongoing systemic power imbalances within the globalized profession. The architectural office itself emerges as the locus of many of these challenges, and as a place where global networks within architectural practice are rendered visible. This thesis then identifies the office as a site of enormous significance for future studies.

Through an examination of the working holiday, it has further shown that Australasian architects were not merely observers of the modern movement but were instead active participants within it. Following the high profile example of pioneers like Raymond McGrath, Amyas Connell and Basil Ward, it shows that Australian architects continued to be an integral part of the global architectural profession well into the twentieth century, intimately tied up in the production of some of the most seminal buildings of the twentieth century.

More specifically, the thesis has demonstrated that there is a special relationship which exists between Western Australia and the UK, which has been in place since the occupation of the state in 1829. As evidenced by the ongoing network which operated between the two centres, this was a relationship that was unusual, at least architecturally, within Australia. It was a relationship that saw an enormous number of Western Australian architect's head to the UK for work in a continually operating network which would become central to the shaping of the architectural

profession in Perth, particularly from the postwar period onwards. This was a relationship which meant that Western Australian architects were better connected internationally, and more attuned to the architectural profession in the UK, than other states, particularly NSW and Victoria who became increasingly inward focused as their professions rapidly expanded.

Ultimately, the contribution that this thesis makes to the broader historiographic field is not just a study of the working holiday as it played out in Western Australia in the 1950s. Rather, this thesis is a study of how architecture cultures are made, and the diverse networks, both personal and professional, that run through them. It is a study of how cultural change within a profession can be instituted by a group of motivated individuals, operating largely outside of the official body. And it is evidence for the global nature of architectural practice in the postwar period, and the complex exchange of ideas, labour, and people that sustained it.

5.4 Reflections on Methodology

As outlined in Chapter 2.2, this thesis was conceptualized as a group biography, using a series of methodological tools and approaches more commonly seen in that field than in architectural history. The use of oral history, life writing sources, and personal archives were the primary sources for this research, supported by material found in traditional archives and literature. There were two primary objectives in adopting this approach and related tools. First, was to provide a method that would overcome, and acknowledge the lack of formal archival material that exists in relation to such a personal and ephemeral journey, which the working holiday was. And secondly, it was to use a methodological approach that would more properly acknowledge the group like nature of the trip. It could reflect the broader social milieu which both participated in this working holiday and provided the sources for the research. It was an approach that would reflect the social aspect of the trip, and the blurring of professional and personal networks which it enabled. This was a journey in life and in architecture, shared between a broad social circle, and which happened on the boat ride, long car trips, drinks at the pub, or over a coffee at a local coffee shop.

This methodological approach also provides a useful entry point for discussing architects and architecture cultures on the periphery of a centralized discourse. These are individuals and professional communities which have rarely been the focus of historical analysis, typically working within a closely bound professional structure which reflects their regional settings. Architects practicing within these communities, and indeed most architects outside the canon, leave little in

the way of official archival material and fractured record keeping practices. Indeed, the fractured, personal archive is the dominant model found around the world: the leaving of intentional, curated, and comprehensive archives is relatively rare within the architectural profession. The approach taken in this thesis – the use of multiple voices, disparate archival sources, oral history, and collective stories – enable these gaps in the archive and the record to be overcome and articulated. It allows the story of distinct local professions to be told, and those of ordinary practitioners who quietly operated within their professional capacities, without the focus on singular heroic figures and landmark buildings as dictated by metropolitan, canonical discourse.

5.5 Future Research

This thesis focused on the working holiday as experienced in Western Australia. In demonstrating the significance of this journey in the shaping of the architectural profession in this one specific case study, it invites comparative studies from around Australia and New Zealand to further understand the true impact and to comprehend the truly vast nature of this phenomenon in the region. This research has uncovered a series of transnational networks and connections that run through Australian architectural practice and these networks and connections would provide fruitful areas for further research and examination. The interaction of Sydney and Perth architects in London, the interaction between the large contingent of women and the Perth architects, and the lasting friendships that were formed between employer and employee, like John Duncan and Erno Goldfinger, and those within the CPB office, open up new avenues for understanding the intersections between international, national and regional practice. While Western Australia and the UK had a particularly strong and special bond perpetuated through these exchanges, there is a need to examine the precise nature of this relationship as it played out across all states.

The working holiday was a moment where Australasian architects were placed in a dynamic, international environment with multiple overlapping networks and provided access to interactions, people, ideas that were otherwise difficult to access or siloed off at home. The trip acted as a pressure chamber, where unexpected interactions were forged, and connections made. Through a widespread examination of these networks and connections, the true spread of Australasian architects across the globe in this period would be revealed, further demonstrating the wholly intertwined nature of Australasia within the global profession. As trips began to be more diverse into the 1960s, areas like Canada and the offices of John Andrews to give two examples, became sites of increasingly intense transnational exchange, and would provide a rich

area for future study.[693] The framework developed in this thesis provides a scaffold onto which the wide range of experiences can be grafted and mapped, building up a more complete and continually evolving picture of the working holiday, and the enormous spread of young Australasian architects that spread out across the globe.

There is also more nuance to be drawn out in taking a wider view of the working holiday across Australasia both within the architectural profession and more broadly across other professional groups. As demonstrated in Chapter 2.1, the working holiday is a distinctly different phenomenon to the well-known journeys made to the UK by sojourners seeking fame and fortune like Germaine Greer, Clive James, Fred Williams, and Barry Humphries. Examining similar journeys taken by a more diverse group of actors including women architects, émigrés, and First Nations people would provide further insight into the agency that this holiday enabled within a wider cultural studies setting. The class divisions that underpin an ability to take the working holiday, and the different mobilities of those that went would also be instructive. Perhaps the most visible group identified in this thesis that could be captured in this broader view would be the study of the women from the broader social milieu identified in Chapter 3.3. This cohort would provide rich material for future research into the mobility of women from this period, and their contributions both in London and upon their return to Western Australia. Figures like Barbara Hill, who emerged as central to the burgeoning cultural scene of Perth in the late 1950s, would make for a keen subject for further research, alongside others like Patricia Garrity, Judith Weedon, Jennifer Flintoff and Marlene Cockburn.

The centrality of community in the making of a distinct architectural culture is a theme which runs through this thesis. This thesis identified communities which flourished in small city like Perth, within the office of major international firms like Chamberlin Powell and Bon, and within the streets of Earl's Court, SW5. These spaces brought together disparate groups of people and provided a stage through which they could interact, discuss, and learn, producing a distinct culture in each setting which could then be expanded upon elsewhere. The importance of community is a theme that provides a useful lens for further studies of similar architecture cultures. A focus on an architectural community not only better reflects the mode of practice in these locations, but can further aid in breaking down a reliance on singular, heroic figures which have dominated

[693] In the mid-1960s there were at least three PTC graduates working for Andrews in his Colborne Street office in Toronto.

architectural history. This is particularly useful in peripheral, small cities like Perth, that are excluded from this style of metropolitan discourse. Through this approach, key sites emerge as critical spaces for the development of architecture culture and warrant further investigation. These range from small professional communities on the edges of global practice like in Perth, to the architectural office itself. These can be viewed as micro environments, where the practice of architecture is a communal undertaking, spanning far beyond the simple making of buildings, and rather to the building of lasting relationships and discourses and would provide meaningful sites for further research.

Finally, this thesis has demonstrated one aspect of how a city as remote and as isolated geographically as Perth, is completely and utterly enmeshed within the architecture culture of the Metropolitan centre. This was a symbiotic relationship where each depended upon and reinforced each other's respective professions through both labour and intellectual engagement. Through an analysis of one small and isolated community, this thesis has clearly shown the vast expanses of the interconnectedness and interdependent nature of the globalized profession, particularly in the postwar period. Centre and periphery, London and Perth, are part of the same extended architectural community, and the idea of a hermetic regional architecture culture, removed from the machinations of the central discourse, is a fiction.

5.6 Final Reflection

The working holiday provided a place away from the pressure and everyday realities of Perth in which young architects could interrogate their place in the world and their architectural interests. It was a natural extension of their education but played out on the global stage. The trip provided a pivotal moment for those who went, a key moment of focus and reflection poised between the sheltered environment of the Technical College, and the realities of commercial practice.

When I met Ronald Bodycoat to interview him for this thesis, over a coffee at The Lane Café in Claremont, he said something which has stayed with me for the entire thesis project. Discussing the intimate community which developed around PTC and the student Association, and those memorable moments outside of the classroom – meeting up at the Shiralee, drinking 'too much beer' at the Palace dive bar, and eating chicken and spaghetti together in Northbridge after class, which carried onto the working holiday - he remarked:

> [I]t's part of what architecture's really all about. It's not sitting in an office and designing. Its building. And its building friendships and relationships with other architects.[694]

The relationships that Bodycoat identifies lay at the core of the Western Australian architectural profession for much of the twentieth century - many of them forged in the classrooms of the Perth Technical College and meetings of the Student Association, and cemented in the share houses, long car rides, and ship cabins of the working holiday.

[694] Ronald Bodycoat, interview with Andrew Murray, 19 December, 2018. Claremont, W.A.

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