

# 7

## A Family Heirloom

The opening episode of the *First Australians* television series concluded with a story of friendship, jointly told by Wiradjuri Elder Dinawan Dyrribang, formerly Bill Allen, and David Suttor, owner of Brucedale, a cattle farming property near Bathurst. Suttor introduced his great-great grandfather, William—a 17-year-old, ambitious to succeed in the new world he saw opening up to him as more extensive settlement was permitted beyond the Great Dividing Range in the early 1820s. Dinawan Dyrribang introduced his ancestor, Windradyne—a fiery young warrior, family orientated and strong in his culture, who met the newcomers with dignity. Wiradjuri people guided William and his father, George, to land with good water, and Brucedale was established. William was left to manage the property with instructions from his father to respect the Wiradjuri. He took these instructions to heart, learning some of the Wiradjuri language. When violence ignited under the pressure of rapidly increasing settler and stock numbers in Wiradjuri country, the ties between the Suttor family and Windradyne and his people held.

A flashpoint came when a farmer offered Wiradjuri people some of his potatoes, but then, when some of the same people returned the following day to help themselves, he rounded up an armed posse to help him ‘defend’ his crop. Several of Windradyne’s family members were killed. Soon afterwards, Windradyne and a group of warriors surrounded William Suttor’s hut at night. William came to the door and spoke with Windradyne in the Wiradjuri language. After extended discussion, the warriors departed. Thirteen other settlers were speared and burned to death in their huts over the following month, and the stock of many

farmers scattered, but Brucedale was spared. The settlers retaliated, killing Wiradjuri men, women and children. Governor Brisbane declared martial law in the Bathurst district on 14 August 1824, and the Wiradjuri faced a military contingent, as well as continued action by landowners and their servants.

Eventually, perhaps recognising the toll the conflict was having on his people, Windradyne and 130 other warriors walked to Parramatta to attend the governor's annual Aboriginal conference and negotiated peace with Governor Brisbane. Windradyne returned to live on his own land, which included Brucedale, and was buried there in the Wiradjuri way. The story closed with Dinawan Dyrribang calling for recognition of the harm and pain caused on both sides of the conflict, and David Suttor thanking the Wiradjuri people for their mercy on that fateful night in 1824; without their goodwill, Suttor said, 'we might not be here today'.<sup>1</sup>

As the voices of Dinawan Dyrribang and David Suttor entwine, their story of friendship takes on a redeeming quality, transcending the larger narrative of war of which it is a small part. The viewer is left with a sense of hope; perhaps difference can be overcome through a common humanity? The cross-cultural friendship of the 1820s is mirrored in the contemporary bond between the two storytellers, brought together by a shared history.

This retelling of the story of Windradyne and William Suttor on *First Australians* was an episode in a long tradition. Each generation of the Suttor family at Brucedale had commemorated their friendship with Windradyne and his people. Successive generations dedicated monuments in literature, concrete and law, adapting the story as the foundations of Australian history shifted beneath it, and as the meaning of friendship itself evolved.

Wiradjuri people, remembering their connections to Windradyne as an important ancestor and cultural and historical figure, have renewed the friendship with the Suttor family, and the two groups of descendants have been telling the story together for more than two decades. My account seeks to understand how this story of friendship has been shaped by its own retelling. It seeks to draw out the possible contemporary meanings of the Suttor family's commemorative acts through the nineteenth and

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1 Nowra and Perkins, 'Episode 1: They Have Come to Stay'.

early twentieth centuries, and to consider the significance of the coming together of the Suttor family's story traditions with those of the Wiradjuri descendants of Windradyne.

Windradyne's grave is at the centre of the story and the friendship. He is believed to be buried on a rise above Winburndale Rivulet, a little over a kilometre from the Brucedale homestead, in a burial ground that holds the remains of at least three other Wiradjuri people. The graves are surrounded by a rich commemorative landscape that continues to evolve, reflecting the developing relationship between the Suttor family, local Wiradjuri people and the state's national parks service, which administers a Voluntary Conservation Agreement signed in 2000 to protect the cultural values of Windradyne's grave. Between the traditional Wiradjuri graves and the commemorative additions of the early twenty-first century sits a memorial dedicated to Windradyne in 1954. It seems oddly out of place, yet it attests to the continuing friendship and is embraced as part of this *lieu de memoire*. It is here that I start.

Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II visited Bathurst on 12 February 1954. The official souvenir booklet prepared by Bathurst City Council described the establishment of Bathurst as a peaceful affair. It referred to the Macquarie Memorial Cairn (erected 1930), which marked the site of that governor's founding of Bathurst, as a 'sacred spot' around which 'Bathurstians' gathered annually to tell the story of their city's beginnings. The only official Wiradjuri presence took the form of a painting of Yuranigh (guide to Surveyor Mitchell) on the decorated roadway that led the Queen's vehicle up to the 'Welcome Gates'.<sup>2</sup> In the Queen's wake came Anzac Day. On 25 April 1954, returned servicemen marched with the Bathurst District Band and wreaths were laid at the War Memorial Carillion. The mayor made a solemn speech, an Anzac Day sermon was given in the cathedral, and two war memorials were unveiled at St Stephens Presbyterian Church.<sup>3</sup> On the same day (or perhaps the following one), members of the Bathurst Historical Society drove to Brucedale to gather around a sturdy concrete plinth beside the grave mound where

2 Bathurst City Council, *Official Souvenir Programme*.

3 'Solemn Scenes at Local Anzac Day Celebrations', *The Western Times*, 26 April 1954, 1–2.

Windradyne was believed to be buried. Following an address recounting the life of Windradyne, Mrs Roy Suttor drew aside the Australian flag to reveal a bronze plaque.<sup>4</sup> The inscription read:

THE RESTING PLACE OF WINDRADENE, ALIAS SATURDAY  
THE LAST CHIEF OF THE ABORIGINALS.  
FIRST A TERROR, BUT LATER A FRIEND TO THE SETTLERS  
DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN A TRIBAL ENCOUNTER 1835.  
‘A TRUE PATRIOT’

This Plaque was unveiled by Mrs Roy Suttor of Brucedale  
25<sup>th</sup> April, 1954.  
Bathurst District Historical Society



Figure 5: Memorial dedicated to Windradyne by Mr and Mrs Roy Suttor and the Bathurst Historical Society in 1954, with two burial mounds visible behind.

Source: Photograph taken by author.

4 Papers of P. J. Gresser, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (hereafter AIATSIS), MS21/3/a, 117–18. Contrary to the memorial's inscription, Percy Gresser stated that the ceremony took place on the 26 April, *The Western Times*, 31 August 1962, 7.

Precisely what moved Roy Suttor, grandson of William Suttor, and his wife, to celebrate Windradyne's memory at this time is unknown. They may have felt a responsibility to mark the pair of fragile and slowly sinking earth graves before they ceased to have a physical presence in the landscape. The commemoration may have been inspired by the 'pilgrimage' led by the neighbouring Orange Historical Society in 1950 to Yuranigh's grave, to mark the centenary of his death.<sup>5</sup> Another possibility is that Roy Suttor was prompted by conversations with Percy Gresser. Gresser was a shearer who had collected Aboriginal artefacts across New South Wales and Queensland on his days off from the age of 16; he retired to Bathurst in 1953 to write an Aboriginal history of the district and attended the ceremony at Bruce Dale. Whatever its immediate inspiration, the commemoration, particularly in its allusions to war, stands out. According to Ken Inglis, memorials to Aboriginal people of any kind were sparse in the mid-twentieth century, and memorials to Europeans killed by Aboriginal people in frontier conflicts tended to avoid any reference to war, instead 'categorising the killing as murder'.<sup>6</sup> The deaths of Aboriginal men and women in the Australian military services remained largely unacknowledged until the 1980s, and it was only at this time that historians and Aboriginal campaigners began to make an explicit connection between the fallen in overseas wars and Aboriginal people who fell in defence of their country against invasion by the British. In 1981, Henry Reynolds asked:

Do we ... make room for the Aboriginal dead on our memorials, cenotaphs, boards of honour and even in the pantheon of national heroes? If they did not die fighting for Australia as such they fell defending their homelands, their sacred sites, their way of life.<sup>7</sup>

5 The party laid a boomerang-shaped wreath on Yuranigh's grave, marked by four commemorative carved trees, and a stone engraved to Mitchell's specifications in 1852 (replaced with a replica c. 1900). Percy Gresser wrote about the two commemorations back-to-back. Percy Gresser, 'The Aborigines of the Bathurst District', *The Western Times*, 31 August 1962, 7. The owner of the property on which the grave was located erected a fence around it, and later donated the land to Cabonne Shire Council. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 'Yuranigh's Aboriginal Grave Historical Site: Plan of Management', July 1999, p. 7, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, accessed 27 May 2010, [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/parks/pomfinalyuranighs.pdf](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/parks/pomfinalyuranighs.pdf). The impulse may also have come through the Suttor family. Jock Suttor, who grew up on the family property at Wyagdon, spent much of his adult life travelling and living in Asia. On one of his visits home in the early 1920s, he had attempted to locate the grave of Georgie Suttor, an Aboriginal man who had taken the family name, so that he could erect a memorial. Teale, 'Suttor, John Bligh (1859–1925)'; Papers of P. J. Gresser, AIATSIS, MS21/2, 29–30.

6 Read, *A Hundred Years War*, 11; Inglis and Phillips, 'War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand', 181.

7 Reynolds (1981), quoted in Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 423–24.

Ten years later, as Chilla Bulbeck asserted, there were still ‘no memorials’ that responded ‘to Reynolds’ suggestion’.<sup>8</sup> The meaning of the inscription at Brucedale, dedicated amid the commemorative mood of Anzac Day in 1954, is further explored below. However, first it is important to look back at the story of friendship that Roy Suttor inherited by examining the ‘monuments’ left to the friendship by previous generations.

In 1826 and 1829, two letters appeared in colonial newspapers under the pseudonym ‘Colo’, but were addressed ‘Brucedale, near Bathurst’ and ‘B-----e near Bathurst’, respectively, which would have made their origin with the Suttor family quite clear.<sup>9</sup> At that time, George Suttor and his wife Sarah Maria were residents at Brucedale, probably accompanied by most of their 10 children.<sup>10</sup> The letters possess the authority and diplomacy of a mature writer, which might suggest George Suttor’s involvement; however, his son, William, who was in his twenties when the first letter was written, is also a candidate.<sup>11</sup> Both letters are rich sources for understanding the nature of the friendship between local Wiradjuri people and the Suttor family. The first offered to share some ‘sketches of the manners and customs ... of the Aborigines ... inhabiting the country round Bathurst’ with ‘fellow admirers of ... the works of God’. ‘Colo’ painted a harmonious scene at Brucedale that included Windradyne (referred to as ‘Saturday’ throughout) and his people sitting around small fires singing and laughing; ‘Colo’ sharing his crop of turnips with them; and them visiting the house to borrow pots and pans or, at times, a comb. In return, the Wiradjuri kept an eye on runaway cattle, a welcome service on any property.<sup>12</sup> ‘Colo’ provided a pattern for coexistence, attributing to his Aboriginal friends the idea that:

8 Bulbeck, ‘Aborigines, Memorials and the History of the Frontier’, 173–74.

9 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3–4; *The Sydney Gazette*, 21 April 1829, 3. The same letter was printed in *The Sydney Monitor*, 18 April 1829, 2, and *The Australian*, 15 April 1829, 3.

10 Almost a decade after the establishment of Brucedale, George and Sarah Maria moved back to their original grant, Chelsea Farm, at Baulkham Hills, and from 1833 spent much of their time in a town house in Sydney, commuting back and forth to Chelsea Farm and Brucedale. George Suttor, *Memoirs of George Suttor*, 59.

11 William managed Brucedale soon after its establishment and formally took it over in 1834. Though he seems not to have been a writer by nature—he is renowned within the Suttor family for having written nothing at all—he participated vigorously in the public life of the colony. Percy Gresser canvassed the possibility that ‘Colo’ was George Suttor Jnr, William’s eldest brother (b. 1799). John Suttor, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2009; Parsons, ‘Suttor, George (1774–1859)’; Norton and Norton, *Dear William*, x; Papers of P. J. Gresser, AIATSIS, MS21c, loose leaf.

12 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3–4. The letter is dated 25 August 1826.

All wild animals are theirs—the tame or cultivated ones are ours. Whatever springs spontaneously from the earth, or without labour, is theirs also. Things produced by art and labour are the white fellows [sic], as they call us.<sup>13</sup>

The explosive conflicts in the Bathurst area had passed, but they would still have been fresh in the memories of all those who survived them. Groups of Wiradjuri people had gradually made peace with local authorities in the latter months of 1824, and the outlawed Windradyne had appeared at the native feast at Parramatta at the end of the year accompanied by a large group of Wiradjuri people, wearing a straw hat with the word 'peace' stuck in the band.<sup>14</sup> However, there were precedents for these sorts of gestures—they did not necessarily indicate that war was over. In 1805, Aboriginal people thronged to Parramatta from the fringes of the Cumberland Plain to reconcile with Governor King after he lifted an injunction aimed at keeping Aboriginal people out of settled and farmed districts. Yet, the people of the lower Hawkesbury and Broken Bay fought on.<sup>15</sup> 'Colo' sought to improve readers' impressions of Aboriginal people, in particular, those of the Bathurst district. Echoing the catalogue of virtues of the 'noble savage' that Rousseau and his followers had cited since the mid-eighteenth century, his tableau of domestic harmony and his praise of local Aboriginal people seem to have been aimed at encouraging readers to establish friendly and trusting relations on a sustainable basis.<sup>16</sup>

As more and more Wiradjuri country became other people's 'property', the Wiradjuri, like other Aboriginal peoples, became dependent on friendly relations with pastoralists to ensure ongoing access to their country. Gundungarra man Werriberrie or William Russell, reflecting on his life around Picton and Burragorang, mapped out a constellation of properties where he camped and worked as a young man in the mid-nineteenth century. The relationships had been established by his mother's and

13 Ibid.

14 In October 1824, for example, it was reported that about 60 Aboriginal people had come in to the settled district and re-established their previous 'peaceable footing', *The Sydney Gazette*, 28 October 1824, 2. Windradyne's appearance at the native feast is reported in *The Sydney Gazette*, 30 December 1824, 2.

15 This was the third 'coming in' of the Hawkesbury people after 15 years of sporadic conflict intermeshed with friendship, domestic intimacy encompassing men, women and children, and cultural exchange (including mutual education in different forms of justice and retribution, and complex patterns of loyalty), Karskens, *The Colony*, 460–90.

16 Clifford, *Political Genealogy after Foucault*, 1–4.

uncles' generation, and Russell himself continued to maintain them.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that Brucedale was becoming part of a network of safe places where local Wiradjuri people could continue to camp, work and meet. Reynolds observed that the 'coming in' of Aboriginal groups provided a conceptual challenge to many settlers who, during times of uncertainty and conflict, had found themselves infused by a hatred born of fear and now had opportunities to exert power over vulnerable Aboriginal people in their midst.<sup>18</sup> 'Colo' presented a model of benevolence for pastoralists; having accepted the friendship offered by Aboriginal people who had 'come in', he took a position of patron over them, as well as the role of host to their broader networks. He made a point of documenting the welcome he extended to large gatherings of Aboriginal people, boasting that he had accommodated at least 150 visitors from neighbouring areas on one occasion.<sup>19</sup>

Lively debate had occurred in public meetings and in colonial papers across the early 1820s. A number of correspondents advocated the use of 'terror' as a means of teaching the Wiradjuri groups around Bathurst how to submit to colonisation, while others sought to remind them that both races were members of the human family, and that they should reflect on the manner in which they had appropriated Aboriginal land before becoming bellicose about the spearing of a few (or even 100) sheep.<sup>20</sup> Many of those counselling restraint and compassion did so from an evangelical standpoint, advocating missionary work as a means to making the natives peaceful.<sup>21</sup> The God 'Colo' invoked drew from a secular, humanitarian model. Advocating for the Wiradjuri in the aftermath of war, he called on higher values in the reader, the British Empire and the governor alike: 'Let us hope that while Briton [sic] is making such amazing progress in Knowledge and in science, she will still enlarge her humanity'.<sup>22</sup>

17 Russell (Werriberrie), *My Recollections*. Russell was in his mid-80s when he collaborated on this brief memoir with friend and neighbour, A. L. Bennett.

18 Reynolds, *Frontier*, 63–72.

19 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 4.

20 See, for example, letters from 'Philanthropus' and 'Honestus', *The Sydney Gazette*, 5 August 1824, 4 and 12 August 1824, 4. As Salisbury and Gresser noted, the identities of most of these correspondents are unknown and one or more of them could also have been members of the Suttor family. Salisbury and Gresser, *Windradyne of the Wiradjuri*, 52.

21 Roberts and Carey, "'Beong! Beong! (More! More!)"', n.p. See letters to *The Sydney Gazette* from 'Philanthropus', 5 August 1824, and 'Amicitia', 19 and 26 August 1824, and to *The Australian* from 'Adaelos', 30 December 1824.

22 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 4. He also invoked the growing threat to good order in the district posed by bushrangers, and contrasted these wrongdoers with the 'innocent' Aborigines who were united with the settlers against them.

On one level, ‘Colo’ welcomed the reader into a circle of friendship with Windradyne and his people. Yet, he also set himself apart, saying: ‘I have always been friendly to them, and have directed my people to avoid giving them offence. We have never suffered the smallest injury from them’. He laid the blame for the recent loss of life on both sides on ‘the imprudent and *cruel* conduct of some of *our* people’—that is, those settlers who had armed their convict servants against the Wiradjuri and had themselves failed to exercise proper restraint.<sup>23</sup> The record of escalating violence from 1823, and the period of martial law in the latter months of 1824, leave the historian with a hazy understanding of the nature and severity of the conflicts. It seems that about 13 Europeans were killed; however, the scale of loss of life on the Wiradjuri side is much less readily estimated. The complexity of official approaches towards such conflict at the time is partly to blame for this obscurity. As Ann Curthoys explained:

The Colonial Office never wavered in its refusal to acknowledge that a war of conquest was occurring, or in its insistence that the rule of law could and should prevail and that Indigenous life could be protected.<sup>24</sup>

It was important to assuage the concerns of ‘the humanitarians in London’ and, as Mark McKenna observed, to leave a ‘record of the government’s determination to defend Aboriginal rights’. However, the government was ‘satisfied for the squatters to run ahead of government in their rush for wealth’, and it was well understood that Aboriginal people and their rights would suffer in the process.<sup>25</sup> Governor Brisbane reported that the period of martial law had seen virtually no bloodshed. Some historians and storytellers have charged him with a ‘cover-up’. In fact, there is

23 Ibid. (emphasis added).

24 Barker, *A History of Bathurst*, vol. 1, 67–72. European lives lost were carefully documented in evidence given to Major Morisset following his arrival in Bathurst in May 1824. NSW State Archives (hereafter NSWSA): Colonial Secretary; NRS 897, main series of letters received, 1788–1825, 4/1799, 31–48. Curthoys, ‘Indigenous Subjects’, 89. War with Aboriginal people was held to be impossible because they were to be considered ‘subjects of the Queen’; it was this status that was supposed to provide them with protection. McKenna, *Looking for Blackfellas’ Point*, 53.

25 McKenna examined a series of exchanges between Governor Bourke and Lord Glenelg in response to Batman’s Port Phillip treaty and the colonisation of the New South Wales south coast. Governor Brisbane’s proclamation of martial law was a similar record. McKenna, *Looking for Blackfellas’ Point*, 52–54.

little firm evidence to support either version of events.<sup>26</sup> ‘Colo’ himself was not straightforwardly conciliatory, stating in principle that ‘natives’ might be justly ‘chastised under the authority of a military officer, or some respectable, authorised, accountable person’ in situations in which defensive measures were necessary. He emphasised that Wiradjuri women and children had been killed in the recent conflicts (something that the governor’s proclamation of martial law explicitly sought to avoid), as if laying a charge of cowardice against the type of settler who had been involved in vigilante action. ‘Colo’ did not criticise Major Morisset or Governor Brisbane for their actions.<sup>27</sup>

The Reverend William Walker, a Methodist minister who had been appointed as missionary to the ‘black natives of New South Wales’, also lamented that Aboriginal men, women and children had been ‘butchered’ by settlers in the west; yet, in July 1824, he had signed a landholders’ petition for military intervention to ‘overawe the natives’ and bring them to ‘a state of due Subjection and Inoffensiveness’.<sup>28</sup> George and William Suttor likewise saw their interests in productive land to the west of the ranges as legitimate, and may have felt that punitive action of some sort

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26 Brisbane reported to Earl Bathurst that ‘only seven Europeans have lost their lives ... and the number of [natives] ... can only be gathered from conjecture, but in all probability they do not much exceed double the number of Europeans’. He was ‘gratified’ to report that ‘not one outrage was committed’ during the period of martial law. Thomas Brisbane to Earl Bathurst, 31 December 1824, in Watson, *Historical Records of Australia*, series 1, vol. 11, 430–32. Mary Coe described the action under martial law as a ‘campaign of genocide’, and dubbed Brisbane’s claim to have ‘restored tranquillity without Bloodshed’ the ‘official cover-up’. Coe, *Windradyne—A Wiradjuri Koorie* (1989), 43. See also Elder, *Blood on the Wattle*, 49–51. Peter Read found that although some of the stories about massacres seem to have been exaggerated, it is plausible ‘that between one quarter and one third of the Bathurst region Wiradjuri were killed’ in these conflicts. Read, *A Hundred Years War*, 10. John Connor, in a military history of Australian frontier conflict, found that the Wiradjuri outclassed Morisset’s military operations; his main expedition had difficulty even finding them. The tables were only to turn with the use of mounted cavalry—first deployed against Aboriginal people of the Hunter region in 1825. Only when settlers or soldiers came upon Aboriginal people by chance, could guns be used to kill in large numbers, as Chamberlane, William Cox’s overseer did near Mudgee in late 1824. Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*, 52–62.

27 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3.

28 Claughton, ‘Walker, William (1800–1855)’: NSWSA: Colonial Secretary, NRS 897, main series of letters received, 1788–1825, 4/1799, Bathurst settlers to Brisbane, 16 July 1824, 73–76. The petition was signed by nine other landholders, including William Cox and Samuel Marsden. Several of the same men had made an appeal for government assistance, dated 3 June 1824, citing the murder of seven men by Aboriginal groups (pp. 51–54).

against the Wiradjuri had been necessary.<sup>29</sup> As Penny Russell observed of Robert Dawson's account of his work establishing the Australian Agricultural Company operations at Port Stephens in the mid-1820s, 'Colo's' letter depicted 'his encroachments upon Aboriginal land as a story of advances in contact and friendship'. Like Dawson, 'Colo' seems to have sincerely desired to understand his presence as peaceable. While recognising some of the adverse effects of encroaching 'civilisation' upon Aboriginal people, both men 'regretted only [their] inability to prevent this—never [their] instrumentality'.<sup>30</sup>

In exploring the relationships between Victorian philanthropist Mrs Charles Bon and Victorian Aboriginal men William Barak, Thomas Bamfield and others, Liz Reed distinguished between Bon's advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal people and her personal friendships with them, and represented these two forms of goodwill as intimately related. Reed found that Bon's public role as a 'friend to the Aborigines' was sustained and motivated by her relationships 'with individual Aborigines in which [she] appeared to demonstrate an emotional connection and from which she derived personal comfort'.<sup>31</sup> 'Colo's' friendship with Windradyne and his people might be understood in a similar way. While he may have been a humanitarian on principle—George Suttor certainly counted himself a committed pacifist—'Colo's' act of advocacy appears to have sprung from genuine affection towards the Wiradjuri people whose country overlapped with Brucedale.<sup>32</sup> What 'Colo's' 1826 letter does not do (and I count myself slightly foolish for having hoped it might) is represent any profound friendship between the writer and any Wiradjuri individual. It evinces no meeting of minds, no deep conversation, no shared repasts—which is not to say that no such meeting of minds existed. To the contrary, if such intimacies did exist between George

29 When George Suttor found that the grant he had occupied on the Macquarie River was to be allocated to another settler, he wrote to Brisbane indignantly, 'granting my station to another will destroy all my hopes of prosperity there'. NSWSA: Colonial Secretary, NRS 897, main series of letters received, 1788–1825, 4/1832, letter 374, George Suttor to Brisbane, 14 June 1822, 1–2. Ann Curthoys saw a repeating pattern across the continent as settlers claimed new land and then attempted to defend their interests there, appealing for government support and sanction of punitive expeditions. Curthoys, 'Indigenous Subjects', 86–90.

30 Russell, *Savage or Civilised*, 58, 75–77. Dawson's memoir, *The Present State of Australia*, was published in 1830, after he returned to England.

31 Reed, 'Mrs Bon's Verandah', 39.1–39.2.

32 Suttor, *Memoirs of George Suttor*, 17. As a botanist, he probably also shared the respect for (and dependency on) Aboriginal expertise and assistance that his colleague and friend George Caley was forced to assert when Governor King ordered Aboriginal people out of the settled districts in 1801, Karskens, *The Colony*, 479.

and William Suttor and Wiradjuri people, 'Colo' may well have chosen not to write about them in this rather proselytising letter.<sup>33</sup> While some colonists disagreed with philanthropic feeling towards Aboriginal people, its expression was much less likely to provoke the vehement opposition that intimate associations with Aboriginal people or targeted advocacy could inspire.<sup>34</sup> Risking the invocation of a threat to colonial order by elaborating on cross-cultural collaboration and communion would have been counterproductive to the letter's aim of normalising general inter-racial harmony on more or less British terms.

Virtually nothing is known about the way in which Windradyne and his family understood this friendship. If Wiradjuri people did direct George and William Suttor to the site of Brucedale, then, in doing so, they placed them on Wiradjuri country.<sup>35</sup> Maria Monypenny, writing of Tasmania, observed that the assimilating impulse and capabilities of Aboriginal groups are often overlooked:

It would be a mistake ... to assume that, because Aborigines were prepared to accommodate Europeans, they saw themselves becoming part of the European world. It is possible that, initially, they saw Europeans as becoming part of their world, and that it was on that basis that they were willing to co-operate with the newcomers.<sup>36</sup>

At least initially, the Wiradjuri may have been friendly towards the Suttor family not only, or chiefly, because they were benevolent, but also because they (the Suttors) had been satisfactorily incorporated into the local Wiradjuri world. 'Colo's' education in the structure and language

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33 I have not discovered any more private source in which relations with Aboriginal people at Brucedale are discussed. George Suttor's brief memoirs do not discuss relations with Aboriginal people on Brucedale. I have so far found only one family letter from Brucedale in the early years. George wrote to Sarah Maria near the end of 1823 describing the new garden at Brucedale, which he and his second son, Charles (b. 1804), were tending, while William, along with his younger brother John (b. 1809), were expected to return soon from a five or six week journey into the hinterland. George evinced some concern about their welfare, but gave no details of their purpose or likely interactions with Aboriginal people. Suttor Family Papers 1774–1929, ML Manuscripts Collection, MSS 2417, item 3, 119.

34 Reed notes that Mrs Bon's cross-cultural collaborations and effective cohabitation with Aboriginal people at times led to her situation 'on the outermost boundary of acceptable European behaviour', which she was also at times accused of crossing, 'betraying her race, [and] behaving in ways unbecoming for a woman of her class'. Reed, 'Mrs Bon's Verandah', 39.3, 39.8. See also Reynolds, *Frontier*, 83–88.

35 According to Coe, the place may have been at a safe distance from sacred sites and their favourite camping and hunting grounds. Coe, *Windradyne—A Wiradjuri Koorie* (1989), 24.

36 Monypenny, 'Going Out and Coming In', 73.

of neighbouring groups appears to have been ongoing. At the time of writing, he had been introduced to people belonging to eight distinct local groups and instructed on their place in local networks.<sup>37</sup>

‘Colo’s’ second letter, printed in *The Sydney Gazette* and *The Sydney Monitor* in 1829, was a report of Windradyne’s death, offering a ‘biography’ of this famous Aboriginal man to the reading public. Following a tradition of obituary writing developed by John Nichols, editor of London’s *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, it provided a warm and respectful appraisal of Windradyne’s character and person. ‘Colo’ assessed his subject as a man ‘who never suffered an injury with impunity, [for] in his estimation revenge was virtue’. Yet, Windradyne also ‘possessed the healing art’ and was caring and compassionate in his ministrations to the sick. Whereas, in his earlier letter, ‘Colo’ had been content to refer to the man as ‘Saturday’, this time he was very clear that ‘his original or aboriginal name was Windrodine’.<sup>38</sup>

‘Colo’ made it clear that the deceased had made a valuable contribution to colonial society by avoiding conflict for the latter part of his life. He wished the reader to understand that this signified conscious and deliberate restraint, rather than apathy or ignorance, speculating that Windradyne’s ‘high and independent spirit felt uneasy at times seeing his country possessed by the white fellows’. In a manner characteristic of his chosen genre, ‘Colo’ presented a clear account of the cause of death and used anecdote to illustrate the character of the deceased. Importantly, he also utilised the obituary itself as a vehicle for more general political comment, reproaching Europeans for their cruelty to this ‘inoffensive race’. His description of Windradyne’s ‘head, his countenance, indeed his whole person, [as] a fine specimen of the savage warrior of New Holland’, may be read as constituting an assertion of difference. While description of a subject’s physical qualities was not unknown in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, a perusal of obituaries from 1829 suggests that, in cases in which the deceased was considered a gentleman or gentlewoman (for ‘persons of interest’ also graced Nichols’ columns), the emphasis was on the

37 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3.

38 *The Sydney Gazette*, 21 April 1829, 3. The letter is dated 24 March 1829. Starck, *Life after Death*, 5, 20–22, 32. In 1826, Nichols’ own obituary appeared in the magazine. If George Suttor did not read the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in his youth, or in the colony, then we might imagine him whiling away his hours in the court waiting room in 1810–12 (as a witness for Bligh in the court martial of Colonel George Johnston) reading the magazine’s obituary columns. Parsons, ‘Suttor, George (1774–1859)’.

deceased's discerning taste or intellect, with more oblique references to the physical, such as the form of the subject's handwriting or nature of his or her 'constitution'.<sup>39</sup>

'Colo's' mode of commemoration was not common in *The Sydney Gazette* of the time. The death notices composed by the editor were terse. Where they blossomed into compact tributes, it was usually because the deceased was 'respected by all who knew him'; little approximating an appraisal of character was offered. This pattern was enlivened by the occasional import from England, or a more extensive homegrown effort, such as the obituary of Mr Isaac Nichols, postmaster, printed in 1819.<sup>40</sup> Although the deaths of few Aboriginal people were noted in the Sydney press, a handful of well-known identities claimed far more column space than most eminent Europeans. Some of these were presented simply as a matter of curiosity. For example, the 1817 report of the death of 'Mirout' (or Mahroot) focused on the 'fracas' in which this man 'of docile friendly disposition' lost his life. The infamous 'Musquito' had died a decade earlier and *The Sydney Gazette* had featured a report on the elaborate funerary ceremony conducted by his friends and relatives, rather than an account of the man himself. In contrast, the Aboriginal men known as Andrew Sneap Hammond Douglas White and Thomas Walker Coke both received lengthy obituary-style tributes that assessed them in terms of their adoption of, and into, 'civilisation'. White's 1821 obituary concluded that 'all proved unavailing—ancestral habits being too indelibly engendered ever to be eradicated', while Coke's, of 1823, celebrated that, 'up to the period of his death, he gave satisfactory evidence of his acceptance with his Maker'.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, George or William Suttor, writing as 'Colo', provided Windradyne with a dignified tribute to his place in his own

39 *The Sydney Gazette*, 21 April 1829, 3; Starck, *Life after Death*, 46; *The Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1829*, 444, 446. The use of physical description in the obituary of a celebrated wood engraver drew attention to a difference of class: 'Mr Bewick's personal appearance was rustic; he was tall, and powerfully formed. His manners too, were somewhat rustic; but he was shrewd, and never wished to ape the gentleman'. *The Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1829*, 414.

40 See, for example, the very brief death notices of Augustus Alt, *The Sydney Gazette*, 14 January 1815, 2; Captain Charles Waldron, *The Sydney Gazette*, 6 February 1834, 4; and a young man who fell from a horse, *The Sydney Gazette*, 11 February 1834, 4. By contrast, Nichol's recreational and gardening and boat building activities, as well as his efficiency as postmaster are described, *The Sydney Gazette*, 13 November 1819, 3. For an imported obituary (source not acknowledged), see that of Mrs Hannah Moore, who died in Bristol, providing an account of the literary and charitable achievements of this 'benefactress of her species', *The Sydney Gazette*, 1 February 1834, 3.

41 *The Sydney Gazette*, 23 August 1817, 3; 19 December 1806, 2; 8 September 1821, 3; 6 February 1823, 3.

society as well as his fame, or infamy, in European circles. This was the deed of a friend, not necessarily an intimate or confiding friend, but certainly a staunch and admiring one.

‘Colo’ probably imagined his friendship with Windradyne through the rich and flexible vocabulary of amicable relations that traversed philanthropy and sociability, available to him through the theory, literature and English practice of friendship of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Although he understood that the status of ‘chief’ was not recognised among the Wiradjuri, in the world depicted in his letters he addressed himself to the most famous of Wiradjuri men, Windradyne, at times as a partner in a rational, pragmatic alliance between men that combined sympathy and loyalty with ‘mutual interest’ (such as that often forged between partners in commerce) and, at other times, in a less intimate, but no less trusting, political alliance in which he and Windradyne stood as representatives of their respective peoples. ‘Colo’ did not indulge in any late eighteenth-century sentimentalism in describing his own relationship with Windradyne; however, his description of the fervently loyal relationships between Wiradjuri men—to the death—might have been intended to counter the idea that savages were incapable of friendship due to a lack of moral refinement and, thus, to indicate that real friendship was possible between, and with, Aboriginal men. Conversely, ‘Colo’ directed his philanthropic love of humanity at the Wiradjuri in general as fellow human beings (though lower on the scale of humanity) who might be ‘uplifted’ by his attentions.<sup>42</sup>

An intensely patronising strain was evident in ‘Colo’s’ 1826 letter to *The Australian* in which he referred to the Wiradjuri as ‘rude children of nature’ and advanced the opinion that:

The laws of nature are their laws. They have not, that I can find, any other code ... If knowledge be progressive in the human mind, in theirs it has hardly yet advanced one step, nor have their ideas began to shoot.<sup>43</sup>

Would a mutually respectful relationship with a Wiradjuri person have been possible for the writer of this letter? Reading it in the early twenty-first century, immersed in an understanding of friendships as emotionally

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42 *The Sydney Gazette*, 21 April 1829, 3; *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 4; Garrioch, ‘From Christian Friendship to Secular Sentimentality’, 185–87, 194–208; Brodie and Caine, ‘Class, Sex and Friendship’, 263.

43 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3–4.

intimate, one-on-one relationships between equals, it is difficult to gain a footing in 'Colo's' thinking or to evaluate how different his public articulation of friendship might have been from his day-to-day interactions with Windradyne and other Wiradjuri people. 'Colo's' statement about a lack of code or law throws doubt on the depth of the writer's cultural exchange with the Wiradjuri people, as it evinces ignorance even of a kinship system into which he may himself have been adopted.

According to Russell, Dawson negotiated the complex social universe created by the interaction of Aboriginal people with Europeans of upper and lower social classes by setting himself securely atop it as 'master, arbiter and educator'. While Dawson experienced a loss of control over this universe at times, he was able to rationalise this, partly through writing about his experiences.<sup>44</sup> As he wrote, 'Colo' seems to have been making a transition between gentlemanly first-contact relationships with leaders such as Windradyne and 'Sunday', whom he likened to Apollo and Hercules, and the kind of intimacy he perceived as being feasible in the future. He pointed towards the 'improved ... manners' of the Aboriginal people he knew, and noted their 'docility' and potential to be 'useful and faithful servants'.<sup>45</sup>

The question of whether it was George or William Suttor who wrote these two letters is not insignificant for their interpretation. George was not the same generation as Windradyne; he was aged in his mid-50s in 1829, while 'Colo' estimated that Windradyne was about 30 years old when he died. If 'Colo' was George Suttor, it is notable that he singled out Windradyne as a leader and did not mention any of the Aboriginal Elders who would have been his own peers.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, William would have been slightly younger than Windradyne, making 'Colo's' adopted position of 'patron' even more striking. It was William and Windradyne who

44 Russell, *Savage or Civilised?*, 56–68.

45 *The Australian*, 14 October 1826, 3–4.

46 Dennis Foley, examining the nature of Windradyne's leadership, found that after witnessing the 'destruction and extermination of his Elder system' and fighting for his people's survival, Windradyne was heralded as a 'chief' by the Europeans. He then 'lived out his days as a token of what he had once been' as 'a warrior without Elders'. In these letters, and in much of the historiography that has followed them, Windradyne does appear as 'a warrior without Elders'. To what extent this was a failure of recognition or representation on 'Colo's' part, or a symptom of his selective socialising with Windradyne's clan, is not possible to say. Foley, 'Leadership', 180–85.

formed the friendship feted in recent retellings of the story.<sup>47</sup> This may have something to do with the contemporary appetite for fraternal rather than paternal-filial love, discussed further below, and is certainly related to William's part in the dramatic story preserved for posterity by his eldest son, W. H. Suttor, in which William, surrounded by Windradyne and his warriors, talked his way out of harm.

W. H. Suttor left a lasting monument to the friendship between his father and Windradyne in his *Australian Stories Retold and Sketches of Country Life*, published in 1887, compiled from short pieces written for *The Daily Telegraph* over a number of years. His 'stories retold' were 'chiefly gathered from the press records of the day, and from the word of mouth of old colonial friends', whereas the 'sketches' were from his own experience.<sup>48</sup> Among the 'stories retold' is an account titled 'Western Rebellions: Black and White', in which Suttor coupled the story of the British–Wiradjuri conflicts of 1823–24 with a famous bushranger story. He described the exchange around the potato field as the breaking point in British–Wiradjuri relations. The main thrust of the story was the merciless pursuit of Wiradjuri lives under martial law, which Suttor noted was a legal construct incomprehensible to the Wiradjuri. The story climaxed in a massacre built on a deception; Wiradjuri people were tricked into thinking that the settlers were making peace, as the settlers laid out food in a semblance of generosity before shooting indiscriminately. For Suttor, the landscape, which appeared peaceful, 'secluded and very romantic-looking', was haunted by this 'dastardly massacre'. Here and elsewhere, he chastised the settlers for their treachery.<sup>49</sup>

W. H. Suttor employed a language of war that was slippery. In pairing the Wiradjuri conflicts with a bushranger story, he characterised the conflicts as civil, a 'rebellion' in which Wiradjuri men were as 'offensive' to good order as bushrangers. At the same time, he alluded to a great historical war, concluding:

47 For example see Nowra and Perkins, 'Episode 1: They Have Come to Stay'; Heritage Listing, Grave of Windradyne, State Heritage Register Database, Record Number 5051560, Heritage Branch NSW, accessed 9 February 2009, [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07\\_subnav\\_01\\_2.cfm?itemid=5051560](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_01_2.cfm?itemid=5051560). Debra Jopson, 'Grave a Symbol of 180 Years of Friendship', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 2002.

48 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, preface.

49 *Ibid.*, 44–45. This is the theme of at least one of his other stories in the volume: 'Vengeance for Ippitha', in which a massacre is also perpetrated, showing the treachery of white men to be far greater than that of the Aboriginal people, an ironic rejoinder to his century's assessment of Aboriginal warfare as 'treacherous', because it is unpredictable and inexplicable in terms of British rules of engagement, see for example, Curthoys, 'Indigenous Subjects', 87.

When martial law had run its course, extermination is the word that most aptly describes the result. As the old Romans said, ‘They made a solitude and called it peace’. The last effort of a doomed race was thus ended.<sup>50</sup>

Roman historian Tacitus had put those words into the mouth of a Caledonian chief about to take on the Romans.<sup>51</sup> Suttor’s reference was, perhaps, intended to make readers aware that Aboriginal people were in the same position as their own British ancestors had been. Yet, at the same time, the classical reference committed this heroism to the distant past. Suttor’s story arraigned the protagonists (and European migrants to Australia more generally) for their part in destroying Aboriginal life, but did so in the romantic tradition of the late nineteenth century in which the Aboriginal ‘race’ was already extinct and the suitable sentiment was regret. Indeed, when he published his book, there would have been few of the original settlers of Bathurst still alive to have their consciences impugned. Yet, though the sting was taken out, his story nevertheless preserved ambivalence about the success of the pioneers and a vestige of the dilemmas of the 1820s.<sup>52</sup>

In the second part of the book, W. H. Suttor narrated his family’s migration across the range. In ‘A Cattle Muster in the Hills’, he told the dramatic story of the surrounding of the hut by Windradyne and his men in the night. ‘Fully equipped for war’, the Wiradjuri were ready to enact a ‘reprisal’ in response to the hostile acts of the settlers, including the poisoning of dampers left where Wiradjuri people would find and eat them. William Suttor is the hero of the story, meeting the warriors ‘fearlessly’ and courteously talking them down in their own language. A pre-existing friendship is briefly and enigmatically invoked: ‘They never

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50 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, 45–46. A similar admixture characterised contemporary responses to the conflicts. An editorial in *The Sydney Gazette* referred to the engagement of the Bathurst district in ‘an exterminating war’ (14 October 1824, 2) and also made whimsical allusions to the Battle of Waterloo. One of Windradyne’s contemporaries, likewise engaged in action against the colonists, was admiringly referred to as ‘Blucher’ after a much celebrated Prussian general who, alongside the Duke of Wellington, defeated Napoleon only a decade earlier—an identification that could equally dignify or mock. In the same issue of *The Sydney Gazette* in which the death (in combat with settlers) of this Wiradjuri man was reported, an article recounting the Battle of Waterloo also appeared. *The Sydney Gazette*, 30 September 1824, 2, 4.

51 Tacitus’s Galgacus rallied his fighters with an assessment of the Roman character: ‘plunderers of the earth these, who in their universal devastations finding countries to fail them, investigate and rob even the sea ... To spoil, to butcher and to commit every kind of violence, they style by a lying name, *Government*; and when they have spread a general desolation, they call it *Peace*’ (‘Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant’). Tacitus, ‘The Life of Agricola’, 284.

52 Foster, Hosking and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions*, 26–28.

molested man or beast of my father's. He had proved himself their friend on previous occasions'.<sup>53</sup> The meaning of this encounter cannot now be recovered. Perhaps, in surrounding the hut, Windradyne's party meant to warn William and scare him into contracting his pastoral operations; alternatively, the Wiradjuri men may have gathered to remind William of his ongoing mutual obligation in this rapidly developing conflict.<sup>54</sup>

Although the events were not strictly within his own experience, W. H. Suttor told this story among his 'sketches'. A private story made public, it set his own family apart from other Bathurst settlers and provided insights into Wiradjuri decision-making that were not explicable in British terms. The glimpse of the relationship between William and the Wiradjuri men involved in the encounter is radically different from the kind of friendship described in the first half of the book. There, a situation of goodwill persists between Windradyne and the settlers-in-general after the cease of conflict:

He is said to have been really a fine specimen of the manly savage. For some time before his death he lived in peace with the whites and stories are told of his goodnatured and affectionate conduct towards the children of his former foes.<sup>55</sup>

This brief and formulaic description of Windradyne as a 'manly savage' echoes press accounts of his visit to the annual feast at Parramatta in 1824, in which he was celebrated as 'without doubt the most manly black native we have ever beheld', rather than family memories.<sup>56</sup>

W. H. Suttor was born five years after Windradyne's death, in 1834; therefore, he was not one of the children who had felt Windradyne's affection. He did not document any other stories of his father's or grandfather's relationships with Wiradjuri people in the 1820s. Instead, he wrote of his own diverse friendships with another generation of Aboriginal people in his 'sketches', including his childhood admiration for 'Maria'

53 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, 65.

54 Shayne Breen demonstrated this in the central Tasmanian context, in which he found (on close examination of European accounts of similar events) that the Pallitorre people, in conflict with scattered outstations in the late 1820s and 1830s, often meant to create fear through the threat of violence (surrounding huts, demonstrating that they were armed and dangerous), rather than using violence itself. In a series of events in June 1827, the Pallitorre surrounded and plundered a number of outstations, and killed one man who had repeatedly attacked them, and spared another, who was presumably innocent of such crimes, when he was at their mercy. Breen, 'Human Agency'.

55 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, 45.

56 *The Sydney Gazette*, 30 December 1824, 2.

and her skills as a swimmer and verbal sparring partner, and his affection for ‘Laughing Billy’, who he grew up alongside and later buried in a way that attempted to pay respect to his culture.<sup>57</sup> W. H. Suttor depicted these people in short anecdotes; he did not link them to place or to family, and their identity within Wiradjuri networks, if he knew of these connections, was not recorded.

Brucedale was one of the Bathurst Plains stations notable for its continued employment of Aboriginal people into the late nineteenth century. It may have provided sanctuary to local Wiradjuri people in the way that Hermannsburg did for Arrernte people, or Weilmoringle did for the Muruwari—that is, requiring or prompting them to change in significant ways, while enabling them to maintain links to family and country.<sup>58</sup> However, facing his reading public, W. H. Suttor wrote as if he understood his friendships with Aboriginal people as essentially belonging to the past. He was aged in his 40s and early 50s when he wrote *Australian Stories Retold*. Already a member of the Legislative Council and owner of several sheep stations in the Darling District,<sup>59</sup> he wrote as if he could not see a future for Wiradjuri people. He made poignant reference to traditional burial practices as the last sign of a Wiradjuri presence in the landscape:

These people who fill my early memories of the ‘Great Plain’ with kindest reflections are nearly all gone. A mound of earth here and there slowly and surely sinking to the common level, with adjacent trees scarred over with deep-cut markings ... are all that remain to remind us that they ever were.<sup>60</sup>

Under such circumstances, extending his friendship towards the Wiradjuri people seemed a commemorative act.

It was in this spirit too that Mr and Mrs Roy Suttor honoured Windradyne as the ‘Last Chief of the Aboriginals’ in 1954. The oral traditions of the Suttor family seem to have merged with, and emerged from, W. H. Suttor’s small volume across the twentieth century. David Suttor told me that he grew up thinking that the stories about Windradyne were all family oral tradition, and was surprised when he found much of it in his great-great uncle’s book. John Suttor (Roy Suttor’s son) was proud to see his son

57 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, 81–97, 145–48.

58 Papers of P. J. Gresser, AIATSIS MS21/3/a, 73; Gill, *Weilmoringle*.

59 Ruth Teale, ‘Suttor, William Henry (1834–1905)’.

60 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, 85–86.

David appear on *First Australians* telling the story as he had taught it to him.<sup>61</sup> When Wiradjuri man and ABC news anchor Stan Grant Jnr visited Bruceedale sometime before 2002, John Suttor welcomed him with the family copy of *Australian Stories Retold* in his hand. He took Grant to Windradyne's grave and to the hut that Windradyne surrounded on that fateful night in 1823, reading aloud from the book.<sup>62</sup> W. H. Suttor may have written the extinction of the Wiradjuri, but his book has played a significant part in keeping the story of friendship alive.

At the close of World War Two, Anzac Day retained its significance in the definition of the Australian nation: 'the digger stood for freedom, comradeship, tolerance and the innate worth of man'.<sup>63</sup> As Joy Damousi observed, a complex dual loyalty—both to the nation and to the British Empire—endured through the 1950s, reinforced by that first visit by a reigning monarch in 1954. Australians continued to identify themselves closely with the empire's new incarnation, the Commonwealth of British nations, reinforced by Menzies proclamation that 'our nation is British in blood, tradition and sentiment'.<sup>64</sup> Did the Suttor family and the Bathurst Historical Society recognise Windradyne as a fallen patriot? Did they mean to extend the spirit of Anzac to this long-dead Aboriginal man? W. H. Suttor's reference to a classical war—the Caledonians versus the Romans—may have allowed room for a war memorial of sorts, but one to a hero of distant and different times. It may have been possible to pay tribute to Windradyne as a great leader no longer partisan in defeat, and embodying universally recognised virtues that could be recruited to local national pride. Certainly, 10 or 15 years later, Roy Suttor did imagine Windradyne as a wounded hero at the time of his death as he recounted the family story of Windradyne escaping from the hospital at Bathurst, where he had been taken to have wounds tended, throwing off his bandages and returning to his people at Bruceedale, where he died and was buried.<sup>65</sup>

61 David Suttor, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2009; John Suttor, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2009.

62 Grant, *The Tears of Strangers*, 64–67.

63 White, *Inventing Australia*, 136–37.

64 Damousi, 'War and Commemoration', 303–05. Menzies's speech at the opening (by the Queen) of the Australian–American War Memorial in Canberra in 1954, quoted in Damousi, 'War and Commemoration', 304.

65 Roy Suttor's contribution of this story to Salisbury and Gresser's history (published 1971) is discussed further below. By this time, Roy had been discussing the Aboriginal history of the district with Gresser for more than a decade, Papers of P. J. Gresser, AIATSIS, MS21f, 34.

As Ashton and Hamilton have observed, postwar memorial culture was greatly influenced by war commemoration. Ironically, it was perhaps the very commemorative culture of Anzac, which drew much of its strength from the feeling that the nation was forged through bloodshed and sacrifice at Gallipoli and elsewhere (as the conflicts with Aboriginal nations across Australia 'were deemed not to have happened'), that reflected heroic patriotism back onto Windradyne in 1954. Those who landed at Gallipoli had failed spectacularly in a military sense, but had proved that nothing could be found wanting in Australian manhood.<sup>66</sup> Those gathered around Windradyne's grave in 1954 may have been paying tribute to a similar integrity and virility. Still, given how difficult, even impossible, it was for white Australians to be 'mates' with Aboriginal people during this era, the Suttor family and the Bathurst Historical Society's desire to embrace Windradyne in this way remains 'unexpected'.<sup>67</sup> Their memorial has aged; its stark claim that Windradyne was the 'Last Chief of the Aboriginals' no longer represents the Suttor family or the Bathurst Historical Society's commemorative ideas as they engage in continuing dialogue with Wiradjuri people about their history. Yet, Windradyne's designation as a 'patriot' and the Anzac-like notion that Wiradjuri manhood and courage remains intact in heroic defeat has had enduring appeal for Wiradjuri history-makers.

It was, perhaps, a combination of symbolic flexibility, the assumption that the Wiradjuri were no longer a political force and the erection of the memorial on private land that rendered it uncontroversial, despite being unusual.<sup>68</sup> When Ken Colbung, chairman of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, proposed a memorial statue to Yagan in the heart of Perth as the 150th anniversary of white settlement approached in 1978, he met with stiff opposition. Sir Paul Hasluck, recently retired from the post of governor general, strongly opposed the monument. His wife, Dame Alexandra, who had written a biography of Yagan, declared that he had been a thief and certainly no patriot. Despite support from other quarters, the statue did not go ahead until some years later.<sup>69</sup> However, on private

66 Ashton and Hamilton. 'Places of the Heart', 1; Damousi, 'War and Commemoration', 290–97; Seal, 'Digger', 122–24.

67 Smith, 'The Spectre of Truganini', 14–15.

68 Read, 'The Truth that Will Set Us All Free', 36.

69 Ironically, Dame Hasluck had been eager to credit Yagan with patriotism when she had not felt there was a risk of Aboriginal people taking ownership of the term. Hasluck, 'Yagan the Patriot', 33–48. Bulbeck, 'Aborigines, Memorials and the History of the Frontier', 173–74. A statue was finally set up in 1984. It was beheaded in 1997 when Yagan's own head was repatriated, and then again when repaired. It has been surrounded by ongoing controversy, many preferring that Yagan be clad rather than naked in this public space. Batten and Batten, 'Memorialising the Past', 99–100.

land at Brucedale no public justification was necessary. If the Suttor family thought Windradyne worthy of commemoration, that was all that was needed.

This commemoration may not have helped contemporary Wiradjuri people in any practical way; yet, in signifying a reaching out on the part of the Suttor family, it served a positive purpose. Windradyne's story was a part of the Suttor family's history; the commemoration signalled the family's desire to make sure that it stayed that way. John Suttor, aged in his early teens in 1954, remembered that when the memorial was to be erected, his father Roy followed instructions provided by his father and one of his uncles years earlier to identify which of the tumuli on the hill above Winburndale Rivulet was Windradyne's grave. There was a moment of anxiety as Roy wondered whether he had chosen the correct grave. He eventually rested certain in his decision. Already, Roy had made an even more significant decision—to act on the story handed down to him by his father and uncle, H. C. and Horace Suttor, who were convinced that Windradyne was buried at Brucedale.<sup>70</sup>

'Colo', announcing Windradyne's death in March 1829, had reported that Windradyne was wounded in the knee during a night skirmish, on the banks of the Macquarie River, with a tribe from the south, and that the wound 'mortified', leading swiftly to his death and a respectful burial near the Bathurst hospital:

He continued talking to his countrymen till life was extinct, in the hospital at Bathurst, near which place he was buried, his body being wrapped in his mantle, and his weapons deposited in the grave.<sup>71</sup>

In line with this account, W. H. Suttor, William Suttor's eldest son, believed that Windradyne was 'buried, wrapped in his opossum cloak, in the grounds of the old hospital at Bathurst'.<sup>72</sup> However, a strong

70 John Suttor, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2009. Roy Suttor had also told Percy Gresser he was not sure 'which of the graves is Windradyne's but he was certainly buried in the close vicinity'. Papers of P. J. Gresser, AIATSI, MS21/3/a, 120; Salisbury and Gresser, *Windradyne of the Wiradjuri*, 42–43.

71 *The Sydney Gazette*, 21 April 1829, 3. It is not known whether 'Colo's' account informed the discussions between the three Suttor brothers (H. C., Horace and W. H. Suttor) 60 years later. Grace Hendy-Pooley closely paraphrased 'Colo's' account and replicated his unusual spelling, 'Windrodine', in a short history of Bathurst published in 1905 (though she did not explicitly refer to the letter). Subsequently, though, it seems to have fallen below the horizon for tellers of Windradyne's story. Hendy-Pooley, 'Early History of Bathurst', 230–36.

72 Suttor, *Australian Stories Retold*, note to page 45.

counter-tradition arose within the Suttor family that Windradyne had returned to Brucedale and had died and been buried there. H. C. and Horace Suttor's story, which Roy Suttor recounted to Percy Gresser, held that Windradyne died in 1835 after being badly wounded in a tribal fight. He was taken to the old Bathurst hospital where Dr Busby dressed his wounds. However:

To be confined in hospital was too much for Windradyne, so he tore off the bandages and made his escape, making his way to *Brucedale*, where there were a number of his own people. Gangrene supervened and he died, and was buried, wrapped in his o'possum mantle, by his fellow Aborigines in the sacred tribal cemetery on *Brucedale*.<sup>73</sup>

When W. H. Suttor was writing his book *Australian Stories Retold* in the 1880s, energetic debate apparently sprang up between the three brothers. However, as their father, William Suttor, had died in 1877, no more light could be shed on the divergent traditions and their relationship to one another. Roy Suttor's 1954 memorial represented a decision to claim Windradyne's burial for Brucedale. As the grave mound sunk further into the surrounding earth, the family drew Windradyne to its bosom.

In the mid-1990s, John and David Suttor started to feel that they should do more to protect Windradyne's grave, prompted partly by reflection on the recent Wik and Mabo land rights decisions. Tom Griffiths wrote of the wave of hysteria, fanned by the media, that swept across the nation as land owners worried they might be 'Mabo-ed'. One man in Victoria told Griffiths that 'you'd have to be stark raving mad' to admit to having special sites on your property. John Suttor was bothered by the fragile state of Windradyne's grave, and a second grave mound nearby, which both sat in his paddock with cattle wandering over them. Aware of a local native title claim that made reference to Windradyne's grave, he decided to take the initiative.<sup>74</sup> Encouraged by Wiradjuri elder John Bugg and others, he approached the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to negotiate

73 Salisbury and Gresser, *Windradyne of the Wiradjuri*, 42–43 (original emphasis).

74 Johnson, *Lighting the Way*, 48. The Coe sisters filed a native title writ in mid-1993. One of their objectives was to gain free access to important sites, including Windradyne's grave, or at least to draw attention to the fact that, at that time, land owners' permission was needed to visit these sites. Tony Hewett, 'Wiradjuri People's Writ Immortalises a Warrior', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 June 1993, 8; Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 230. David Roberts noted a reluctance of the Sofala community (about 20 kilometres north of Brucedale) in the mid-1990s to acknowledge Aboriginal sites identified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and found an atmosphere of caution among landholders about the potential presence of Aboriginal artefacts and evidence pointing to massacre sites on their land. Roberts, 'Bells Falls Massacre', 616.

a Voluntary Conservation Agreement that would protect the cultural significance of the grave site into the future. The family's cordial and mutually respectful relationship with Dinawan Dyriribang, the National Parks and Wildlife cultural sites officer with whom they negotiated the agreement, developed through this process.<sup>75</sup>

A 2002 article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* referred to 'a friendship of almost 180 years and six generations' between the local Wiradjuri and the Suttor family, and linked the completed Conservation Agreement with the friendship displayed by Windradyne towards William on that fateful night in 1823:

It is an association [that] saved one Suttor's life and has now saved Wyndradyne's grave from being wrecked by cattle that like to scratch themselves on a cairn [that] the Bathurst Historical Society erected beside it 47 years ago.<sup>76</sup>

This comment attempts to capture a century and a half of relationships within a journalistic flourish. How do we reconcile it with W. H. Suttor's certainty that the family's association with a living Wiradjuri community closed with the nineteenth century? Contact between the Suttor family and the Wiradjuri community was interrupted. Dinawan Dyriribang says that two local Wiradjuri clans left the Bathurst area shortly after Windradyne's death—one went to Wellington where they were documented by the missionary Reverend Gunther, and the other, Peneegrah's people, went to Cowra—but some people stayed too.<sup>77</sup> John Suttor stated that he did not know of any family relationships with Wiradjuri people after Windradyne's generation until he found an old box containing a photograph of an Aboriginal couple who had taken on the family name.<sup>78</sup> Peter Read concluded that the friendships between Wiradjuri people and European farmers during the mid and late nineteenth century could be fragile, as constant change in the white world

75 Johnson, *Lighting the Way*, 48.

76 Debra Jopson, 'Grave a Symbol of 180 Years of Friendship', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 2002. Interpretive signage installed by the National Parks Service at Brucedale in 2010 makes a much more circumspect claim to continuity, stating that Windradyne's 'grave has been protected by seven generations of the Suttor family'. Entry sign installed at the gate of Brucedale, Peel Road, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (Bathurst), 2010.

77 Dinawan Dyriribang, in conversation with the author, 8 July 2011. The Suttor family's close connection with Brucedale was interrupted at this time as well. In the 1840s, as William purchased land and established stations on the Lachlan and Darling Rivers, and as far afield as Moreton Bay, Brucedale was let to tenants for a number of years. Teale, 'Suttor, William Henry (1805–1877)'.

78 John Suttor, in conversation with the author, 20 January 2009.

put pressure on the life ways of the Wiradjuri. The need to move, or marry out, or the death of a Wiradjuri person could result in an absence of Wiradjuri people from a locality for decades, breaking contact with even the most sympathetic Europeans. Compared with the 'bi-cultural community' at Weilmoringle on the New South Wales – Queensland border—where Muruwari and migrant families have lived alongside each other, worked together and shared land, knowledge and childcare across the decades—the Brucedale friendship has been, for much of its history, a symbolic rather than an intimate, involved and practical one.<sup>79</sup>

Yet, this notion of continuity may contain some truth for the present. In her 2002 book, Dianne Johnson drew on W. H. Suttor's accounts of friendship with Aboriginal people as evidence of the Suttor family's continuing relationship with the Wiradjuri.<sup>80</sup> However, as we saw above, W. H. Suttor himself was not able or willing to represent his family's relations with the Wiradjuri as ongoing. Believing that no Wiradjuri people survived in the present, his generation had considered the friendship to be one-sided. Yet, the responsibility to not only preserve the story, but also to actively reaffirm the friendship and share it with a wider public, whether or not it could be reciprocated, was passed from generation to generation. The continuity of this friendship has been rediscovered via the reconciliation era; looking back from a position in which the Wiradjuri have survived, a two-way relationship has now been renewed.

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79 Read, *A Hundred Years War*, 25–28; Gill, *Weilmoringle*.

80 Johnson, *Lighting the Way*, 57–58.

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