



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION	Priestley, Raymond Edward, Sir (1886-1974)
ACCESSION NO	Incorporating 73/79; 74/79; 80/54; 98/96
CATEGORY	University, individuals
ACTIVITY	Vice-Chancellor, Geologist, Polar Explorer
DATE RANGE	1935 - 1974
SIZE OF COLLECTION	18 archives boxes (2 m)

**HISTORICAL
NOTE**

Raymond Edward Priestley was born 20 July 1886 in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, England; the second of eight children to Joseph Edward Priestley and Henrietta (née) Rice. Educated at Tewkesbury Grammar School, where his father was headmaster, Priestley went on to read geology at University College, Bristol (1905 – 1907). Before the completion of his degree, he was invited to serve as a geologist working in association with Edgeworth David upon the British Antarctica ‘Nimrod’ Expedition (1907 – 1909) led by Sir Ernest Shackleton. Subsequently he served as the geologist and meteorologist for the ill fated British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition (1910 – 1913), led by Robert Falcon Scott. During World War 1 he served in France as a wireless operator and was awarded the Military Cross.

After the war Priestley gained a Bachelor of Science (1920) and a Diploma of Agriculture (1922) at Christ’s College, Cambridge. He became a fellow of Clare College (1923) and from 1924 to 1934 Priestley served the University of Cambridge as concurrently the Assistant Register, Secretary to the Board of Research Studies and Secretary-General of the Faculties. On the strength of having excelled in holding several simultaneous positions at the University of Cambridge, Priestley was offered the first salaried Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Melbourne in 1934.

He set about a vigorous reform of the University of Melbourne, one of the key objectives was secure the support and necessary financial funding (in the post-Depression era) to deliver to the ever increasing student population the courses it demanded, to provide the facilities for students to study and socialise as well as the resources and proper wages to retain staff. The brevity of Priestley’s term is surpassed by the significance and long term influence of his vision for the University of Melbourne. Priestley’s tenure is marked not only by his genuine concern for the holistic tutelage of students but also his belief in equality and access, his support of women in higher education and the right of freedom of speech. Priestley brought fresh idealism coupled with an assiduous ethic to implement reforms to make the university relevant and involved in the fellowship of the students, staff as well as with the community at large.

Conceding that within the climate of institutional resistance to the newly created position of Vice-Chancellor and without the adequate financial support from government, industry and the broader community to develop and maintain a world class educational institution – the position he had accepted was ultimately untenable. Priestley took office of the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Birmingham, England (1938 – 1952) a position he retained until retirement.

Raymond Edward Priestley, predeceased by his wife (1961), died at Nuffield Nursing Home, Cheltenham, England, 24 June 1974.

A comprehensive bibliography, further references and an image gallery is located in the UMA Raymond Edward Priestley University Leaders

DATE OF TRANSFER	1973, 1974, 1980, 1998
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Open
DESCRIPTION	Diaries containing newspaper cuttings, annotations, photos, letters, programmes and other ephemera; unpublished reports and miscellanea
NOTE ON COLLECTIONS	<p>The original Priestley's diaries (1/1 – 1/15) are not available for access. A complete photocopy of the diaries is available (2/1 – 2/15) as well as a digital transcript (2/16).</p> <p>Professor Ronald Ridley's <i>The Diary of a Vice-Chancellor: University of Melbourne 1935-1938</i> (Melbourne University Press, 2001), contains an edited version of the diaries, seven of Priestley's public speeches (1936 – 1937) as well as a comprehensive index. The complete transcription used by Professor Ridley in editing the Priestley diaries is available in CD (2/16).</p> <p>Priestley material is held in many international collections, an extensive list of web links is located on the University Leaders web page. < Web Link ></p>
NOTE ON LISTING	Series have been artificially imposed by the Archivist. The collection has been listed to the file level only.
CONSERVATION NOTE	Good condition apart from some yellowing of the newspaper cuttings which have been glued into the diaries (1/1-1/15)
LISTED BY	Denise Driver
DATE	10 June 2008

Series Table of Contents

Series 1	Diaries	1935 – 1938	p.4-6
Series 2	Copies of Diaries	1935 – 1938	p.6-7
Series 3	Report – Survey of Overseas Universities [Unpublished]	1938	p.7-8
Series 4	Miscellaneous	1958 – 1974	p.8-9

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
1	Diaries	<p><i>Series Note:</i> This series comprises original diaries kept by Priestley during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne (1935-1938), as well as three months interim period between leaving Melbourne and the commencement of the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Birmingham, England.</p> <p>These diaries were written at the end of a day and recorded events in his work such as the occurrence of meetings, policy and funding progress, as well as documenting social and political events of both the University and Melbourne, as well as personal family matters and those general interest.</p> <p>Priestley documents his extensive 1936 survey of overseas universities across items (1/5-1/8)</p> <p>These diaries are typewritten, typically in black but also in red ink on the right hand side page. The left hand page was left intentionally blank for the insertion of newspaper clipping, annotations, photos, letters, songs lyrics, programmes and miscellanea.</p> <p>All photographs are black and white prints, with the exception of a colour print in the 'Australian Diary [Volume] 9' (1/12), p. 39[A], all have been glued into the diaries.</p> <p>Annotations and corrections have been made in Priestley's hand in blue/black ink.</p> <p>A handwritten index pertaining to the contents of the each diary are present in items (1/3-1/15).</p> <p>In addition to the index prefacing the American Journal Volumes I – II (1/5-1/6) there is a composite index of persons, places and stories for both volumes contained in (1/6), pp.335-339.</p> <p>Priestley's initial pagination pertains only to individual entries, i.e. 14 August 1935, pp.1-2. Subsequently Priestley paginated most of his diaries in his own hand on the top right hand corner counting only each right hand page. However, 'Australian Diary [Volume] 3' (1/3) does not contain this second form of pagination and 'Australian Diary [Volume] 4' (1/4) only</p>	1935 – 1938

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		<p>contains the partial pagination of 'NZ1-NZ48.'</p> <p>All diaries contain Priestley's personal bookplate illustrating a scene with four penguins, a fur seal and 'R. E. Priestley' in an icy surround.</p> <p>NB: These original diaries are not available for access. A complete photocopy of these diaries is available (2/1-2/15) as well as a complete digital transcription (2/16).</p> <p>The original diaries are bound in dark green cloth with dark green leather on the corners and spine. The title and volume number are in gilt on spine. The exception to this is Priestley's 'English Holiday Diary, 1936' (1/7) which is a photocopy, the original not held by UMA.</p> <p>Priestley corrected the diaries in 1972 before depositing them at UMA. Acc. (73/79)</p>	
1	1/1	Australian Diary [Volume] 1	1 Jan – 26 Feb 1935
1	1/2	Australian Diary [Volume] 2 [Conflict regarding the defined duties and responsibilities of the Vice-Chancellor. p.23]	27 Feb – 30 Jun 1935
2	1/3	Australian Diary [Volume] 3	1 Jul – 19 Dec 1935
2	1/4	Australian Diary [Volume] 4	29 Dec 1935 – 18 Feb 1936
3	1/5	American Journey 1936. R.E. Priestley [Volume] I [Documents Priestley's survey of overseas universities funded by Carnegie Co. travelling via New Zealand to the United States of America and Canada]	19 Feb – 2 May 1936
3	1/6	American Journey 1936. R.E. Priestley [Volume] II [Continues the survey of universities in United States of America and also documents the voyage to England]	3 May – 1 Jun 1936
4	1/7	English Holiday Diary 1936 [Priestley's elder daughter, Mrs. Jocelyn Fleming, lent this volume to the University of Melbourne Archives for the purpose of creating a photocopy. The original volume was returned on 21 June 1974]	13 Jun – 19 Aug 1936
5	1/8	Australian Diary [Volume] 5	20 Aug – 30 Sep 1936

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		[Documents the voyage from England to Australia via South Africa where a survey of universities was conducted]	
5	1/9	Australian Diary [Volume] 6	1 Oct – 31 Dec 1936
6	1/10	Australian Diary [Volume] 7 [Crisis with Barrett, p.156]	1 Jan – 31 Mar 1937
6	1/11	Australian Diary [Volume] 8 [Barrett calls for a report on the University Debating Society meeting; Priestley's subsequent thoughts and lecture on freedom of speech pp.7-13, 62-71]	1 Apr – 30 Jun 1937
7	1/12	Australian Diary [Volume] 9	1 Jul – 8 Sep 1937
7	1/13	Australian Diary [Volume] 10	9 Sep 1937 – 23 Jan 1938
8	1/14	Australian Diary [Volume] 11	24 Jan – 14 May 1938
8	1/15	Australian Diary [Volume] 12	15 May – 30 Sep 1938

2	Copies of Diaries	1935 – 1938
	<p><i>Series Note:</i> This series comprises photocopies of Priestley's Diaries (1/1-1/15) made in 1973 upon the receipt of the original diaries.</p> <p>The photocopies of Priestley's diaries are contained within several envelopes.</p> <p>In addition to Priestley's original pagination, which pertains only to individual entries, i.e. 14 August 1935, pp.1-2., and the subsequently Priestley pagination of his diaries (in his own hand on the top right hand corner of each right hand page), there is an additional or actual pagination, imposed by an Archivist, which has been stamped onto the top right hand corner of the photocopies or occasionally on the reverse of the folio. Acc. (73/79)</p> <p>The complete digital transcript (2/16) of the R. E. Priestley Diaries (1/1-1/15) was transcribed by Ingrid Barker during Professor Ronald Ridley's editing of the diaries.</p>	

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
9	2/1	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 1'	1 Jan – 26 Feb 1935
9	2/2	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 2'	27 Feb – 30 Jun 1935
9	2/3	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 3'	1 Jul – 19 Dec 1935
10	2/4	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 4'	29 Dec 1935 – 18 Feb 1936
11	2/5	Copy of 'American Journey 1936. R.E. Priestley [Volume] I'	19 Feb – 2 May 1936
11	2/6	Copy of 'American Journey 1936. R.E. Priestley [Volume] II'	3 May – 1 Jun 1936
12	2/7	Copy of 'English Holiday Diary 1936'	13 Jun – 19 Aug 1936
10	2/8	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 5'	20 Aug – 30 Sep 1936
10	2/9	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 6'	1 Oct – 31 Dec 1936
10	2/10	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 7'	1 Jan – 31 Mar 1937
12	2/11	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 8'	1 Apr – 30 Jun 1937
13	2/12	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 9'	1 Jul – 8 Sep 1937
13	2/13	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 10'	9 Sep 1937 – 23 Jan 1938
13	2/14	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 11'	24 Jan – 14 May 1938
14	2/15	Copy of 'Australian Diary [Volume] 12'	15 May – 30 Sep 1938
SI	2/16	Digital Transcript of Priestley Diaries (CD) This item is a complete digital transcription of items (1/1-1/15). Microsoft Word document. Generation: Copy of (2/16)	1 Jan. 1935 – 30 Sep. 1938

3	Report – Survey of Overseas Universities [Unpublished]	1938
	<p><i>Series Note:</i> This series comprises three copies of a 'Confidential Report to the Council on The Survey of Overseas Universities' which was tabled to the University of Melbourne Council in 1938.</p> <p>This report delivers the findings of an extensive survey of universities in Britain, the United States, Canada and South Africa made by Priestley during 1936. The survey</p>	

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		<p>of English speaking universities was funded by the Carnegie Corporation with the purpose of assessing the best practice in university administration and funding, and consequently provide a platform for policy development at the University of Melbourne.</p> <p>Priestley diaries (1/5-1/8) document in detail the extent of the survey as well as individuals he consulted and discussions about standards within higher education institutions.</p> <p>To assist with the extensive undertaking, Priestley employed John Frederick Foster as a Survey Officer who authored part of the report, and was subsequently appointed University of Melbourne Registrar.</p> <p>The entire report consists of Part I, pertaining to universities in the United States of America and Canada, authored by Priestley, and Part II, pertaining to universities in Great Britain and South Africa which was authored by Foster.</p> <p>The report is foolscap typewritten. Items (3/1-3/4) contain handwritten annotations in blue/black ink as well as pencil. Items (3/5-3/8) and (3/9-3/11) constitute two complete additional copies. This report has numerous copies but is unpublished.</p> <p>There is also a complete copy in the Registrar's Correspondence Series (UM312), File: 1938/535, which contains a small amount of correspondence regarding the report and associated notes.</p> <p>There is a combined index (3/4) which is typewritten with annotations. Acc. (80/54)</p>	
15	3/1	Part I, United States and Canada, Section I & II by R. E. Priestley [Bound in manila folder, Typewritten with annotations and corrections in pencil, in Priestley's hand. Foolscap pp.1-186, Tables and Remarks 33pp.]	1938
15	3/2	Part I, United States and Canada, Section III by R. E. Priestley [Bound in manila folder, Typewritten Foolscap pp.187- 409.]	1938
15	3/3	Part II - Great Britain and South Africa, Section I- The Provincial Universities [by J. F. Foster] [Foolscap pp. 1- 270., Appendix on British University Libraries 25pp.]	1938

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
15	3/4	Indexes to Part I & II. [Typewritten Foolscap, Unbound.18pp.]	1938
16	3/5	[Duplicate Report as per (3/1). Signed on front cover, 'F. H. Johnson, 5 July 1938.']	1938
16	3/6	[Duplicate Report as per (3/2). Signed on front cover, 'F. H. Johnson, 6 July 1938.']	1938
16	3/7	[Duplicate Report as per (3/3), pp. 1-103.]	1938
16	3/8	[Duplicate Report as per (3/3), pp. 104 – 270. Prefaced by an index 6pp.]	1938
17	3/9	[Duplicate Report as per (3/1)]	1938
17	3/10	[Duplicate Report as per (3/2)]	1938
17	3/11	[Duplicate Report as per (3/3)]	1938

4	Miscellaneous	1958 - 1974
	<i>Series Note:</i> This series comprises miscellanea. Item (4/1) is from Acc. (98/96), items (4/2-4/6) are Acc. (74/79).	
18	4/1 Leather map case [Dark brown leather case with clear plastic front panel which has 1 inch gridlines. On the back of the case is a small leather hoop and metal ring on either side, presumably to attach a carry strap. 'PRIESTLEY, R.E.' stamped into leather beneath the press-studded closure flap. Case is empty. Plastic panel is yellowed. Leather is brittle and fragile. Not dated. 32 x 22.7 x 2 cm.] Acc. (98/96)	N.D.
18	4/2 Memoir 'Wireless Memories round and about the First World War including an Adjunct's view of the Wireless Training Centre at Worcester 1915 to 1917 (written in 1958 and copied for distribution at the Final Dinner R[oyal] E[ngineers] Wireless Signals Association (1914 -18) – 1 st May 1971). Priestley, Raymond. [Printed cover, 14 page.] Acc. (74/79)	1958
18	4/3 Letter from Raymond Priestley to Newcome Wright, 19 April 1971, advising that he is forwarding a copy of 'Wireless Memories' (Item: 4/2). Handwritten, 1p.	1971

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		Acc. (74/79)	
BWP/ 2501	4/4	Photograph of five people of the occasion of 'The Final Reunion "winding up" of The Royal Engineers Wireless' Signals Association, Worcester 1914-1918. Guild Hall, Worcester, 1 st May 1971. Labeled on verso (right to left) 'W. G. Taylor, secretary; Sir Raymond Priestley; Major (Councillor Burn); Col. Max Holdsworth; Alan Jolliffe. BWP.' [Stamped on verso: 'Berrows Newspapers, Hyler Rd., Worcester Order No. 92512.' 15.3 cm x 20.3 cm; black and white print, glossy] Acc. (74/79)	1971
18	4/5	Obituaries of Raymond Edward Priestley and notice of memorial service. Three newspaper cuttings – no date or name of newspapers. Acc. (74/79)	1974
18	4/6	Order of 'Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Raymond Edward Priestley, K.t. M.C., D.Sc., M.A. The Abbey Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Tewkesbury [England], Wednesday 3 rd July 1974. Printed pamphlet, 6pp. Acc. (74/79)	1974

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