

Split over Ned Kelly's motivation

Bunn, Anthony . The Border Mail ; Albury-Wodonga, N.S.W. [Albury-Wodonga, N.S.W]30 June 2018: 0.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

NED Kelly author Ian Jones has been accused of driving the greatest hoax in 20th century Australian history by declaring republicanism motivated the Glenrowan siege.

Monash University historian Stuart Dawson has written that Kelly's republicanism is a "romantic fantasy with no documentary evidence to support it".

His work Ned Kelly and the Myth of a Republic of North-Eastern Victoria takes particular aim at Mr Jones, who has promoted the bushranger's supposed political agenda since 1967.

"The tale of the Kelly republic is a complex narrative most fully indebted to master scriptwriter Ian Jones, built on a wrongly claimed uncertainty about Kelly's movements in the few minutes immediately after the second police volley at Glenrowan, highly selective evidence, and Lloyd's creative oral history," Dr Dawson wrote.

The latter point refers to Kelly relative Thomas Lloyd who told Mr Jones in 1964 of the preservation of a copy of the declaration of a republic the bushranger was reported to have made.

Dr Dawson rates the Kelly republic as "Australia's greatest 20th century history hoax" after it was recorded in a spoof in The Bulletin periodical in 1900.

Mr Jones said he had not read Dr Dawson's piece.

Asked what he thought of the hoax description, Mr Jones replied by querying Dr Dawson's rationale.

"I wish I knew a little bit more about Stuart Dawson," Mr Jones said.

"I'd love to know what his motivations are for this; I think it's something rather more than a dedicated search for historical truth."

Dr Dawson declined to speak to The Border Mail, writing in an email "because the Kelly world is so polarised, (the book) needs to be looked at on the evidence presented".

Mr Jones said critics of the declaration "have to say it doesn't exist because obviously they are so bright, if it did exist, they would know about it".

He cited the Jerilderie Letter and the work of late Victorian Chief Justice John Harber Phillips in support of his view.

"John said there was hard evidence and John was a man who was a lawyer and as chief justice was highly experienced in weighing fact," Mr Jones said.

"He was a meticulous scholar and I met him over the phone many years ago when he was researching Ned Kelly's trial and I was tremendously impressed by the depth of his research."

Dr Dawson wrote if there was validity to the republic claim Kelly would have mentioned it after his capture and his family would have spoken of it.

But Mr Jones said Kelly would have feared his family and associates would be prosecuted for treason.

Ned Kelly Vault founder Matt Shore says there is "something in" the idea the 19th century bushranger had desires for a republic in the North East.

"I'm not convinced either way, but there's too much oral history to discount some sort of concept," the Beechworth tourism operator said.

"Personally I don't think it was a fully-fledged concept.

"It was an 'up yours' gesture from Ned, but I think there was something in it.

"The descendants say they grew up with the idea, but the hard part is there is no proof."

Mr Shore said he had spoken recently to a man who reported that he had seen the declaration made by Kelly of a republic.

However, he said the man would not go public with his pronouncement because, in the world of Kelly aficionados, he would be treated akin to somebody that believes in UFOs after spotting an extraterrestrial spacecraft.

CREDIT: Anthony Bunn

DETAILS

Subject:	Republicanism; Hoaxes; Oral history; 20th century
Location:	Australia
Company / organization:	Name: Monash University; NAICS: 611310
Identifier / keyword:	Cinematic art Date of death Author
Publication title:	The Border Mail; Albury-Wodonga, N.S.W.
First page:	0
Publication year:	2018

Publication date:	Jun 30, 2018
Section:	News
Publisher:	Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited
Place of publication:	Albury-Wodonga, N.S.W.
Country of publication:	Australia, Albury-Wodonga, N.S.W.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--Australia
Source type:	Newspapers
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2061532820
Document URL:	https://search.proquest.com/docview/2061532820?accountid=12528
Copyright:	Copyright (c) 2018 Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited. www.bordermail.com.au. Not available for re-distribution.
Last updated:	2018-06-29
Database:	ProQuest Central

LINKS

[Linking Service](#)

Database copyright © 2018 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)