

'If, searching for an answer, I parade before me the people who inhabited my childhood, I hear their voices more clearly than I see their bodies. Nor do I see their clothes, apart from a few scraps of memory attached to people — the clomp of Father's gumboots; the shiny back of Arthur Coulter's vest; the round priest-like hat of Pud Marantelli, driving his gig to Finley: as we approach him in our car we recognize him because his heavy frame slumps on the side of the vehicle where the springs have weakened so that he, hat and the arm he flings along the back of his seat are forever at angles to each other. We usually say, passing him, that we pity his horse.'

Three miles as the crow flies from Finley, thirty-four miles from Deniliquin in New South Wales, stretched the avenue of peppertrees leading to the farm on the plain where Chester Eagle grew up in the 1940s.

This is a book full of resonances: the charting of a family and a way of life which is at once uniquely the boy's and as familiar to us all as the fact of Hiroshima and the mythical figure of Bradman astride the land.

Cover photograph: from a private collection, Jerilderie, N.S.W.

CHESTER EAGLE

MAPPING THE PADDOCKS



MAPPING THE PADDOCKS CHESTER EAGLE

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