

timber floorboards baked into the surround clay soil (Figure 1) was strong evidence for suggesting the structure's destruction by fire.

It was also established that there were seven original buildings on the property, including archaeological evidence suggesting that some sites contained more than one structure over time. Plans are being made to revisit the site in November to continue the research, including work on a nearby flourmill site. During this visit, the archaeologists will identify more about structure location and construction detail, as well as continuing the gathering of data allowing a glimpse into life of people who lived at the picturesque but isolated site overlooking the Blackwood River during the last 148 years.



*Figure 1.* The end of unit 2 square S11 showing fired clay with floorboard moulds (A), low-fired brick (B) and charcoal remains of a flooring joist (C) from the site of the 1859 dated Southampton Homestead (Meath 2007)

**Shane Burke**

### **OTHER WA NEWS**

In October 2007 Corioli Souter was awarded her MA thesis titled “Archaeology of the Iron Barque Sepia-An investigation of Cargo Assemblages”. Corioli is a curator in the Department of Maritime Archaeology at the Western Australian Museum.

#### *Thesis Abstract*

The Western Australian Museum houses a large collection of artefacts from late nineteenth century iron sailing vessels, wrecked en route from Britain. The bulk of this collection comprises cargo objects, destined for sale in the Swan River colony. The protection

afforded artefacts, due to the integrity of these shipwrecks, presents new research opportunities for identifying particular classes of commodities which were considered either necessary or desirable for colonial consumers.

This thesis examines the notion of material consumption as reflected in shipwreck assemblages in Western Australia for the later nineteenth century, prior to Federation.

The research is concerned with the notion of cultural continuity from Britain through specific product selection, as demonstrated by the archaeological assemblages of iron barques importing general merchandise into the colony. Focusing on the Sepia (1898), the objectives include an appraisal of shipwreck cargo artefacts and their applicability to questions relating to consumer behaviour.

While the primary objective of this study is on the identification of cargo assemblages, it presents an opportunity to study taphonomic processes and provide a method of relating the vessel to its cargo contents in order to answer broader questions about shipping practices, with a particular focus on stowage. This research also critiques shipwreck collections comprised of selectively recovered, unprovenanced artefacts and suggests appropriate methods for using such material.

***Alistair Paterson***

## QUEENSLAND NEWS

No response to request for news this issue

## TASMANIA NEWS

***Compiled by Greg Jackman***

### **RICHMOND GAOL COURTYARD EXCAVATIONS**

A team of Parks & Wildlife Service staff and Green Corps volunteers have transformed the courtyard of the Richmond Gaol from a leafy cottage garden to a stark prison courtyard. The courtyard restoration is one aspect of a significant interpretation upgrade and maintenance works for the Richmond Gaol Historic Site.

Generally, the gaol has had few modifications since the day it closed as a convict gaol complex in 1898. It was built in 1825-27, pre-dating Port Arthur by about five years and remains one of the most intact places of incarceration from the early convict period of Australia.

Over the years various plantings by a succession of occupants and caretakers had created a leafy, cottage garden environment with bitumen and brick pathways. The aim of the recent archaeological work was to help return the courtyard to its original purpose, an austere prison exercise yard.