



The public viewing artefacts at Perth's Government House

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REPORT FROM ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Archaeology at UWA has recently seen new and ongoing research initiatives relevant to historical archaeology.

The most exciting has been the launch of the Center for Rock Art Studies at the end of 2010 which brings together a range of experts in rock art studies, including studies of historical rock art in Western Australia (<http://www.uwa.edu.au/rock-art>). The Premier, Colin Barnett, has committed \$300,000 to the new Centre. Potential students can contact any of the archaeologists if interested in rock art studies.

Sean Winter, a doctoral student, completed excavations at York and Toodyay convict depots. Fifty students of the field school unit participated in the Toodyay fieldschool, and student volunteers have spent the subsequent 6 months assisting Sean process the excavated materials in the laboratory.

The ARC Discovery project *Picturing Change* studying contact rock art in Australia is in its final year. Last year saw a range of outcomes, including the oldest date for an image of a Macassan prau (Tacon et al 2010). In Western Australia several trips recorded contact images on Woodstock Abydos and near Port Hedland in collaboration with both Gariara and Palyku Traditional Owners (Paterson and Brady, to be published 2011).

Alistair Paterson has taken on two new roles to promote heritage in WA, as a Councillor of The National Trust of Australia (WA), and member of the Maritime Archaeology Advisory Committee (WA Museum).

There have been several recent publications of relevance to Australasian historical archaeology from UWA staff and postgraduates including:

Anderson, R. (ed.) 2010. *Final report on SS City of Launceston (1863-1865) excavation and conservation 1997-2009*. Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology Special Publication No. 16.

Rodrigues, J. 2010. 'Managing Australia's private shipwreck collections from early souvenir hunting activities.' In *World Universities Congress Proceedings II, 20/24 October 2010*. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Turkey.

Paterson, A. G. 2010. 'Post-settler Indigenous Archaeology in Australia'. In *The Handbook of Postcolonialism and Archaeology*, edited by J. Lydon and U. Rizvi. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Several graduate research projects (detailed abstracts below) were completed in 2010 and in early 2011 including:

Samantha Bolton, PhD. 'Just Passing Through: The archaeology of late nineteenth and early twentieth century settlements between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia'.

Jennifer Rodrigues, PhD. 'Finders Keepers: an examination of the impact of diver interaction with shipwrecks as revealed by the 1993 amnesty collections.'

Jane Fyfe, Honours. 'What were they thinking, and why did they do it? An archaeological examination of the social behaviours of Europeans expressed through historical inscriptions at two northern Australian rock art sites.'

Some new postgraduate research projects at UWA include historical archaeology, namely:

Ross Anderson (Curator, WA Museum), whose Masters research will explore the archaeology of whaling and sealing in the Recherche Archipelago, Western Australia.

References

Tacon, P. S. C., S. K May, S. J Fallon, M. Travers, D. Wesley, and R. Lamilami 2010. A minimum age for early depictions of southeast Asian praus in the rock art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. *Australian Archaeology* 71 (2010):1-9.

University of Western Australia Thesis Abstracts

Jane Fyfe, Honours thesis, Title: What were they thinking, and why did they do it? An archaeological examination of the social behaviours of Europeans expressed through historical inscriptions at two northern Australian rock art sites.

Rock art research in Australia has been prolific for a number of decades, and many years have been spent investigating how rock art expressed Indigenous responses to contact and colonialism. Until now little interest has been shown in examining the historical inscriptions occurring at the same sites using a fully archaeological approach.

Europeans were not reticent about leaving their marks at rock art sites in Australia and the extant historical inscriptions are an as yet unexplored line of archaeological evidence within the broader field of rock art research.

This study took an archaeological approach to examine what historical inscriptions are able to tell us about the behaviours of Europeans at rock art sites, using Wobst's (1977) premise that artefacts are embedded with the stylistic behaviours of the makers and designed to emit messages.

The capacity of rock art as a grounded, extant artefact able to transmit information has previously been tested in Australian research (e.g. Frederick 2000; McDonald 1999; Smith 1992b), and this study builds on that earlier work to apply the same approaches and principles to the study of historical inscriptions on a granite ridge at Old Woodbrook pastoral station in the Pilbara, Western Australia and in two caves on Ngiangu, south western Torres Strait.

The result is that examination of historical inscriptions, using an archaeological approach has the capacity to answer research questions about social and symbolic behaviours, cross-cultural interaction, social networks and the exercise of power and dominance by Europeans in the Australian landscape. It adds depth and texture to the archaeological record of European activity at the two sites in the study, and has application to more detailed and comparative research with extant and grounded assemblages ready and waiting at rock art sites in Australia and around the world.

Jennifer Rodrigues, PhD thesis, Title: Finders Keepers: an examination of the impact of diver interaction with shipwrecks as revealed by the 1993 amnesty collections

Despite the fact that much research has been carried out on private collecting behaviour and the theories that underpin this phenomenon, collecting behaviour relating to maritime or shipwreck sites including why and what divers collect has not been the focus of previous research. The culture surrounding wreck diving and souveniring in Australia prior to the enactment of the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976 was such that there was little or no restriction on what divers felt they could do to wrecks and what and how much material they removed. As a result, since the 1950s, most wrecks off Australia's coastline that were known to divers suffered varying degrees of impact from souveniring activities. These included the use of explosives, dredging, various tools (hack saw, crowbar, hammer and chisel) to dislodge or loosen material and the removal of complete and incomplete artefacts that were part of vessels' cargo, armament, superstructure or personal possessions of those onboard. Consequently, a portion of Australia's submerged archaeological evidence was known to be lost into private hands, but what proportion, and what material, was unknown. In 1993, a nationwide amnesty was announced to encourage people to declare their historic shipwreck relics for documentation to enhance information on Australia's maritime history.

This study analysed the largely unrecognised and under-utilised source of evidence from the amnesty collections, in conjunction with responses provided in a written survey sent to those who declared objects. This was done to determine the degree of impact that

collecting has had on Australian shipwrecks and to identify patterns in shipwreck collecting behaviour. The results were then used to explore the applicability of existing theories about collecting behaviour such as the criteria applied to adding objects to collections, the different types of collecting (e.g. collecting tangible objects versus collecting of experiences, and collecting rare or mundane objects driven by different personal motivations), changes in collecting behaviour over time due to personal circumstances, and the fate of private collections since acquisition.

Analyses of the amnesty data and divers' responses show that collecting from shipwrecks has changed over time in some respects and is affected by site depth, available diving technology, distances from towns and cities, age of wreck as well as value of goods carried on board. As might be expected, wrecks in metropolitan waters that were reasonably close to towns and in shallow waters were found to be frequently souvenired. However, wrecks in remote locations, and even some in very deep waters were also souvenired by a much smaller but more determined group of recreational divers. Most shipwreck sites across Australia were souvenired but the early Dutch wrecks in Western Australia were heavily targeted by souvenir hunters primarily for their coins and bullion but also because of the rarity of these wrecks and the cargo that they carried.

One main point of difference between other collectors and shipwreck collectors is that, whilst most collectors acquire objects that will fit into their collections based on a set criteria, wreck collectors, because of their limited time underwater and the restricted source of finds available on the seabed, tend to collect whatever they can find and carry away that remind them of their adventure. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of shipwreck collectors: the casual opportunistic collector of objects for souvenir value and the determined and dedicated wreck collector of artefacts with monetary or intrinsic value. Consequently, most maritime collections have no identifiable themes other than that they are associated with vessels, represent an underwater adventure or, for the serious collector, monetary and intrinsic value. In addition, casual collectors tend to have far less impact on sites. The more dedicated collectors, who have spent more time and money accessing sites further away and in deeper waters, are more determined to recover as much as they can resulting in a greater impact on these sites despite involving a much lower percentage of divers visiting them. Other important outcomes of this study are a detailed and critical analysis of the amnesty process, its effectiveness in bringing to light private collections accumulated since the 1950s, and the legal and practical implications for Australian maritime heritage management. As well, there are now the availability of two (relational) databases resulting from this work – the national amnesty artefact database and the national amnesty shipwreck database.

Samantha Bolton, PhD thesis, Title: 'Just Passing Through: The archaeology of late nineteenth and early twentieth century settlements between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia'

In 1892 gold was discovered near what became Coolgardie, Western Australia. The subsequent gold rush brought people from all over Australia and the world to the newly established towns of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. It is a semi-arid region and daily life was dictated by a constant search for both water and gold. To service the increasing population of the Eastern Goldfields, a telegraph line, railway line and water pipeline, known as the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, were built. The Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, designed by C.Y. O'Connor, is a pipeline that pumps water from Mundaring, east of Perth,

to Kalgoorlie, 560 km to the east, and was one of the major engineering feats of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As a result of people travelling to the Goldfields and the infrastructure built, small settlements were established along the migration and settlement corridor between Perth and Kalgoorlie. Some were occupied for a short period of time while others are still occupied today. The population at these sites was mostly transient, with people staying briefly before they moved on. The types of settlements included railway stations, pump stations, water condenser sites and workers' camps, and provided stopping points along the route to the Goldfields supplying food, and more importantly, water.

In the late nineteenth century the Eastern Goldfields were a frontier and were settled in a period of British colonialism and colonisation. These factors, along with the transient nature of the sites and the people that lived there, affected the types of settlements that developed and the material culture used. As well as the range of uses, the nine settlement sites studied in detail were occupied for varying periods, and yet the archaeological pattern was very similar.

There has been a great deal of work on mining sites in Australia and the United States, looking at both technology and, more recently, the social aspects. However there has not been as much work done on other types of sites on the frontier, such as workers' camps and stopping points. The settlements on the way to the Eastern Goldfields were established in an important period of Western Australia's history. They provide an insight into what life was like in this harsh environment and how people adapted to living in the region.

The sites were compared with similar sites in Australia and the United States, such as those occupied during the same time period; were isolated; had specific functions such as mining and workers' camps; or were in a similar environment. As a result of the pattern observed in the Mundaring-Kalgoorlie migration and settlement corridor, and the comparison with other sites, a model for identifying short-term workers' camps in the archaeological record was developed. Temporary sites are characterised by few formal structures, very little building material, a high number of cans, a low number of ceramics and a low number of non-essential or 'luxury' items. One of the most important aspects of this model is that it is not defined by the presence or absence and relative amount of a single artefact type, rather it is the combination of all of these factors that defines a temporary site.

Additionally, it is hypothesised that the characteristics are not solely due to the temporary nature of the sites, but once a settlement starts to become permanent, the population changes, bringing more women and children. It is a result of this change that the settlement becomes more formalised, a greater range of amenities is provided and the material culture changes, resulting in an appearance of permanence.

Daily life at the settlements in the Mundaring-Kalgoorlie migration and settlement corridor was characterised by the transient lives of the people that lived there. The period of British colonisation, colonialism and expansion of the frontier influenced the settlements that formed, and choice of material culture was limited due to supply. Although it was known from historical records that different groups lived in the region, they could not be seen in the archaeological record, and the factors of colonialism, colonisation, the frontier and transience resulted in a homogenous archaeological record.

2011 Honours projects in historical archaeology at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle

Trent Hamersley, Title: The 1829 dated camp on Garden Island

For my 2011 Honours, the narrow sandy island of Garden Island off the coast of Fremantle will be studied as part of research at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle campus. The archaeological investigation hope to achieve three aims:

1. to locate and map the settlement that was established upon the island in 1829;
2. to analyse the locality and use of the land;
3. and to investigate whether there is a landscape of control and its effects upon the populous of 350 of the Swan River settlement's first permanent European group.

This research will offer a rare insight into the sociological and political structures that underlined Australia's first free settlement from Britain.

Daniel Gerson, Title: Blackboy Hill, 1914 First AIF training ground

Blackboy Hill, the First AIF military training camp at Greenmount Western Australia, was established on 17th August 1914. The camp housed over 32,000 men between 1914 to 1918, and is imperative to the history and understanding of Western Australia's involvement in the supply and training of troops for the First World War.

I intend surveying the site to enable an interpretation of the camp's structure and organisation and the lifestyle and living standards of the men who served there. A comparative study will be undertaken of other military camps within Australia and the British Empire to provide context to the survey's findings.

Alistair Paterson and Sean Winter (Postgraduate representative)

QUEENSLAND NEWS

Compiled by Cameron Harvey

COLLAPSED RETAINING WALL REVEALS ARTEFACTS FROM EARLY BRISBANE

On the morning of 13 January 2011, a water main burst adjacent to William Street, in the Brisbane CBD, caused the partial collapse of a retaining wall behind the convict-period Commissariat Stores (QHR600176). Built as a provision store in 1828-29, the Commissariat Stores were added to the Queensland Heritage Register in 1992, and are one of only two surviving convict-built structures in Brisbane—the other being the Windmill Tower (QHR600173).

The collapsed section of William Street also formed part of the 'Early Streets of Brisbane' (QHR700011) which was added to the Queensland Heritage Register as an 'archaeological place' in early 2010. This followed the completion of an archaeological plan of the entire CBD, undertaken as a cooperative project between Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), the University of Queensland (UQ) and Brisbane City Council (BCC).