Strange bedfellows: Green Hill Fort, archaeology, and tourism

GORDON GRIMWADE AND GEOFF GINN

This paper was originally presented in an abridged form at the combined ASHA–AIMA Conference in Adelaide in November 2000.

Green Hill Fort, Thursday Island was constructed between 1891–1893 to defend the Australian colonies against a feared Russian invasion. It retained an operational role until the 1920s and played a minor role in World War 2. From 1954 to 1993 the site, but not the facilities, was used as a weather station. More recently it has been home of the Torres Strait Historical Society and Museum Association museum.

It is a major attraction during the tourist season and an important local icon. For archaeologists it has significance as a relatively intact nineteenth-century military installation. Two 'Centenary of Federation' grants have provided the impetus to undertake conservation and presentation works involving various task-specific, archaeological activities. At the management level archaeologists play the lead role in the project.

The project has demonstrated the value of archaeology and tourism joining forces. The danger of a 'theme park' presentation has been avoided. Technical accuracy and careful site planning has ensured a high degree of accuracy is retained. Provided these qualities can be assured then, it is argued, there is an opportunity for archaeology to be a major, long-term beneficiary. But to achieve that, the discipline must move from being entrenched in its academic mould and become far more receptive to the broader needs of the twenty-first century.

Green Hill Fort, Thursday Island, is something of an enigma (Figures 1a and 1b). It was originally built to deter other colonial powers, particularly the Russians, from establishing themselves in Australia. In the period since its construction, between 1891–1893, that philosophy of repelling visitors has been reversed. Nowadays, even Russian visitors are more than welcome to wander among the fortifications and to photograph the three six-inch guns and the picturesque views (Figure 2).

Our propensity for giving new meaning to sites with totally unrelated original functions seems to have a certain irony about it when it comes to places like a remote coastal fort. No longer is it ‘off limits’. National security is no longer an issue. Turning it into a desirable destination is perceived, in some quarters, as a panacea for rural economic decline. You simply find a heritage place and convert it to a tourist attraction. Of course, this process is one that archaeologists can, justifiably, participate in as a legitimate means of funding research, conservation and interpretation projects.

Funding for Australia’s Centenary of Federation has ushered in a period of potential redefinition for historical archaeology and its strengthening links with the tourist industry. The massive injection of funding by Federal and State Governments into celebration of the Centenary of Federation activities gives, at least de facto, recognition that heritage tourism is a worthwhile focus. It has provided a substantial impetus for archaeology, history and museology. While it may be argued that the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations provided a similar stimulus, with projects such as Port Arthur, the 2001 celebration appears to have spread funds more widely but, perhaps, not necessarily more wisely.

In Queensland alone, the State Government, with the Commonwealth Government, has committed $10.2 million to Centenary of Federation projects and identified 32 major projects to be developed under the Heritage Trails Network programme (Roberts & Bullock 2000: 14) at a total value of $100 million. The Commonwealth has committed $10 million nationally to its History and Education Programme. Several have archaeological components to them. Its range of major centenary projects offers similar high levels of potential for archaeologists.

Projects of this nature change the focus of the discipline, moving it further into the public arena and emphasising the
Growing need to solve practical management issues. Part of this process may result in ‘publishing’ the results in non-standard form, such as interactive displays, interpretive signage, and guide books. The extent to which that approach is effective largely depends upon the actual project, the views of management, the nature of the site and the finance available.

In recent years there has been considerable debate on the ‘publish or perish’ theme (Connah 1998, Mackay et al. 1999). Many contemporary archaeological projects certainly provide opportunities to publish professionally but they also open new opportunities. Whether or not these are acceptable to the ‘publish-at-all-costs’ sector of the discipline is conjectural. The positive side of the argument is that archaeology has a chance to redefine itself from a minor, often theoretical, discipline into one having practical values in the socio-economic revitalisation of rural Australia.

Now that might sound a bit high and mighty, but with funding at the level currently experienced in Australia, archaeology can take on a very public face. Research questions, in such situations, more often relate to issues of site management or interpretation aimed at holding public interest and maintaining the site at an appropriate level.

It will, unfortunately, be many years before the Indiana Jones image can be shaken off, and maybe the profession should not try too hard to do that. Instead, it may be used as a building block for proving archaeology to be as useful to modern society as art and environmental science. A partnership between archaeology and tourism offers opportunities to give archaeology a significant stake in the future, but it is essential that public presentation needs to be innovative on the one hand but not so crass as to develop a theme park mentality about an archaeological site. The two disciplines have disparate aims but ‘a marriage of convenience’ is not necessarily an impossibility. Competition for the tourist dollar must not erode scientific accuracy while embracing the need for innovation and quality.

There is an opportunity in such partnerships to expand the concept of ‘publish or perish’ to ‘publish and present, or perish’. Failure to do so could result in archaeology going the way of Latin scholars and dinosaurs.

Centenary of Federation funding to tourism and archaeology related projects provides a chance for expanding on the impressive expertise of advances in Australian public archaeology and the ‘limited edition’ consultancy reports now floating in the ether. Much of the work of consultants, admittedly, has little direct outcome in a public or a published sense, but it is a valuable research and management resource.

Getting archaeology across to the public requires reappraisal of what archaeologists do and why they do it. Most importantly, there needs to be community acceptance that such work has worthwhile outcomes (Grimwade & Carter 1999: 165). Developing meaningful linkages with the tourist industry requires a quantum leap in thinking on both sides. If sites are to be properly conserved and interpreted it must not be left to commercially driven business, or even the enthusiastic hobbyists, to be the firepower. Archaeology can, and should, take a major role. There is little point in sitting on the sidelines moaning that such-and-such a project was not done properly. Green Hill Fort, Thursday Island, has provided just one further example where archaeology, history, and museology have been able to play a significant role in pulling together a particularly worthwhile heritage project aimed at both tourists and local residents.

**THE GREEN HILL FORT CASE STUDY**

The approach at Green Hill Fort has been to conserve and develop a place of national significance into a more stimulating visitor destination, and doing so in consultation with the local community. Technical accuracy has been paramount.
Every opportunity has been taken to enhance the visitor experience even during the research and conservation phases. This has ranged from brief explanatory talks to visitors and frequent media releases and interviews to a photographic exhibition of work in progress. There is nothing innovative in that philosophy of course; it has been adopted in many places for many years (Binks et al. 1988). The critical aspect here, however, is that archaeology can play a defining role in the emerging interest in heritage tourism.

The Torres Strait Historical Society and Museum Association, through agreement with the Torres Shire Council, administers Green Hill Fort. In 1998, the society was successful in its bid for funding under the Commonwealth’s major Centenary of Federation projects. A grant of $572 000 was provided for conservation and interpretation of the site. In 1999 the society received $384 000 from the Queensland government for displays relating to the role of the Torres Strait in Australian military history. In 2000 a further $50 000 was granted, via a Torres Shire Council proposal, to construct a viewing platform. In the context of the recent discussion the funding received required a range of archaeological research to be undertaken to direct the conservation and presentation programmes.

**GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES**

The implementation of those initiatives necessitates consideration of the geographical and historical factors, which are central to this remote, tropical, maritime site. They are factors which have significant impact on such a project.

Several challenges immediately face any project on Thursday Island (TI). First, it is remote. Brisbane is 2 300km away (Alice Springs and Dili are closer). Cairns, the nearest major centre, is 800km by air to the south. Twice-daily air services operate between the two centres but it takes three hours each way. An hour of that time is taken to transit from the airport, on neighbouring Horn Island, to TI. Weekly barges transport most of the cargo and a handful of passengers. During the dry season, from about May to September or October, most potential visitors drive up Cape York and catch one of the regular ferries plying between TI and Bamaga, near the tip of the cape, 40km south of TI.

This remoteness has helped the island retain a charm of its own. It is more akin to a Pacific nation than to an Australian regional centre. 'TI time' has to be experienced for itself; few events run to a precise schedule.

Thursday Island covers approximately 3.5km². It is a rugged, continental island adjacent to the much larger islands of Horn and Prince of Wales. Hammond, Goodes and Friday Islands are among the many smaller islands within its immediate vicinity. The population of about 3 800 lives primarily on the hillslopes to the southeast (Port Kennedy) and the north (Tamwoy, Rose Hill and Waibain). The central hills have been favoured for defence and communication facilities since soon after European settlement in 1877. Prior to that the Kaurarar were seasonal residents as natural water supplies are limited.

Green Hill is a grassy ridge, 58m above sea level (asl). It rises steeply from the southwestern extremity of the island. The central range extends north to Millman Hill, 104m asl.

The choice of settling Thursday Island in preference to adjacent, larger and well-watered islands is often questioned in the context of modern requirements. In the late nineteenth century, however, it provided a good anchorage in sheltered waters, while providing commanding views of, and access to, the main shipping channel through the Torres Strait.

**CLIMATE**

It is in the dry tropics. The 1 739mm annual rainfall is seasonal. About 70 per cent falls in the period January to March. Average temperatures range between 16°C and 36.8°C. Mean humidity ranges from 81 per cent RH in January to 69 per cent RH in September. Strong winds are a feature for much of the year. In a nutshell, it is balmy in winter and steamy in summer.

The summer storms and monsoons cause site management problems of flooding and erosion. During the late winter months grass fires present challenges of a different kind, although they can be a blessing when it comes to archaeological surveys as field visibility jumps markedly. Chest high grass is reduced to ash in a few minutes.

Conservation of artefacts requires particular consideration. A tropical, maritime environment requires attention to the care of ferrous metal and fabric. External interpretation calls for special consideration. Ultra-violet light levels are such that interpretive panels need to be of durable colours—red fades in a matter of weeks. It is preferable that signage is sheltered for visitor comfort.

None of these issues are insurmountable, but it does require explanation when above average costs are frequently incurred. Management and interpretive techniques, which are effective in temperate areas, often do not work in the tropics. Tropical climates are challenging environments in which to undertake such activities.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Green Hill Fort was one of a network progressively established around the Australian coast. Amongst others they included sites as far apart as: Fort Scratchley, Newcastle, NSW; Kissing Point Fort, Townsville, Queensland; Fort Lytton, Brisbane, Queensland; Fort Nepean, Melbourne, Victoria; Fort Glanville, SA; and Albany, WA. Although some fortifications in Australia, such as Fort Denison, Sydney, pre-dated the significant late-nineteenth-century expansion, most were the result of recommendations made by Governor Sir William Jervois R.E., K.C.M.G., C. B. and Lt Col Peter Scratchley R.E.

Jervois was an army engineer and, concurrently, Governor of South Australia. Scratchley was a serving British Army engineer and an expert in fortifications. Their 1877 commission was to review the defence requirements of the Australian colonies in the light of continual cut backs by Britain. In supplying defence personnel, there was an increasing feeling in Britain that the colonies needed to have their own defence force capability. As early as 1863 the Duke of Newcastle made it clear to the various colonial governors that colonial defence was an internal issue to which England would be able to make only a limited contribution (Nicholls 1988: 38).

Fear of a Russian invasion was probably the main stimulus for the development of the defences of the Australian Colonies in the nineteenth-century. To Jervois and Scratchley fell the task of defining the defence needs of the Australian colonies (Nicholls 1988: 72).

Thursday Island was strategically important for shipping travelling to the east coast via Southeast Asia. It was also a major refuelling port with coal stored on hulks moored in the harbour. The thought was that raiders heading to more populated centres on the east coast of Australia might seize the coal supplies en route. In 1881 Scratchley recommended fortification of the island (King 1983: 96). There followed much debate over the ensuing few years. That debate further fuelled recognition that federating the Australian colonies would lead to immeasurable improvements in their defence.

Eventually agreement was reached to construct fortifications on Thursday Island. The fort was constructed by contract labour under the direction of Major Edward Druitt, R.E., and foreman George Cyle', between August 1891 and May 1893. Their role was to carve a strategic defence base out of an exposed hilltop on a particularly rocky island. That they
achieved it on time and, apparently, within a budget of £23,053 (S46,106) is testimony to their skill. During the wet season of 1892 they received 3,466mm of rain in the first five months and 7,386mm for the corresponding period the following year.

Druitt's team completed Green Hill Fort and the adjacent, but now demolished, barracks in two years. The fort was excavated from the rocky hilltop with the waste used to build the outer ramparts. Set into the hilltop was a mass concrete and drystone walled fortification. Beneath the central parados, five rooms, encased in 600mm thick mass concrete, provided ammunition storage. The general storeroom, shell store, cordite room, lamp room and artillery store were built initially. Druitt's team also constructed a 25 feet by 15 feet (7.5m x 4.6m) timber and corrugated iron, hipped roof, guardhouse over an underground well with a capacity of 20,000 gallons (91,000 litres). In 1912, a cooling plant machine room, with 'air-conditioning' ducts to the cordite store, and a powder magazine were added.

There was wide-ranging debate over the nature of the fixed weaponry for Green Hill Fort. Initial offers by the British were 'eight obsolescent guns; four rifled muzzle-loading (RML) seven-inch guns and four sixteen-pounders' (King 1983:98). Ultimately it was agreed to provide three more modern six-inch breech-loading guns. Two Mark VIs and a Mark IV were supplied from the Elswick Ordnance Company owned by Sir William Armstrong. The guns, each weighing around 10 tonnes, had a range of 8.4km. They thus, effectively, covered all approaches to Thursday Island's harbour. They were supplemented with nine-pounder field guns, which appear to have been mainly deployed on the hillslopes nearby. A 10-barrel Maxim 0.45-inch machine gun was parapet mounted and is now in the collections of the Museum of Victoria (Skennerton 1989: 13).

Range firing guidance was by means of a Depression Range Finder (DRF) system (Earle 1993: 38). DRF Station No. 1 was constructed on a hilltop 100m to the north-east and linked for much of the way by a stone pitched trench and communications landline. DRF Station No. 2 was within the southern end of the parados to the rear of guns 2 and 3.

Outer defences comprised two barbed wire fences. These were constructed of steel angled posts with six horizontal strands of barbed wire through which further strands were crisscrossed to make narrow, but formidable, four feet high barriers against advancing infantry.

Military personnel were, mainly, housed at the Queen Victoria Barracks (Figure 3). These purpose-built structures were located some 500m north-east of the fort and linked by road. A Captain, Lieutenant and 41 men formed the initial detachment to Thursday Island in June 1893 (artillery staff office letter 6 June 1893). All were members of the Queensland Defence Forces until integration of the Colonial forces in the lead up to Federation in 1901.

During World War 1, the main role was to control maritime traffic passing through the Torres Strait. The only shot allegedly fired in anger was when one ship failed to identify itself. A shot across the bow swiftly resolved that oversight (Earle 1993: 48).

The fort remained operational until 1927. The barracks were systematically demolished and moved to Darwin where the material was used for a variety of purposes. The guns were spiked and the fort abandoned (Earle 1993: 51).

During World War 2, Green Hill Fort was used as a Signals and Wireless Station (Earle 1993: 52). The only significant modification to the fort was to fill the doorway to the artillery store with reinforced concrete, possibly for use as a water tank.

Most allied forces were focused on nearby Horn Island where the airstrip and camps to accommodate several thousand military personnel were located. Although Horn Island was subjected to eight Japanese air raids, none struck Thursday Island.

In 1954 the Bureau of Meteorology established a weather station at Green Hill Fort. It operated until 1993 (Earle 1993: 53). Modifications by that time had included various small sheds on the parados and a fibro-sheeted, timber-framed office over the cooling plant room. The concreted artillery store was used as an underground incinerator.

With the departure of the Bureau of Meteorology the fort passed to the care of the Torres Shire Council, although ownership remained with the Commonwealth Government. The Torres Strait Historical Society and Museum Association was given occupancy rights and the opportunity to develop an on-

Figure 3. Military parade at Queen Victoria Barracks, Thursday Island circa 1899-1900. (Photograph by courtesy Torres Strait Historical Society and Association.)

86
site museum. The bulk of that collection comprised memorabilia associated with the pearling days of the region. The underground magazines afforded 60 m² of display space. The museum opened in 1993.

Climatically, the environment was probably among the worst possible for museum collections: high humidity; potential for internal flooding; unsealed door and window spaces; and poor ventilation. The views and the nostalgic association with a heritage listed fort were the pluses the society faced.

THE PROJECTS

The Commonwealth Federation Grant can be broadly categorised into:
- feasibility studies;
- archaeology;
- conservation action; and
- site interpretation.

The Queensland Government Federation Grant provided for:
- development of museum displays.

The range of feasibility studies included:
- Interpretation Plan;
- Interpretation Design Guidelines;
- Tourism Development Concept; and
- Conservation Plan (of 1998).

In specific terms the tasks included:
- resolving seasonal flooding within the underground magazine, at the northern vicinity of the steps to the magazine, and around No. 3 gun;
- removal of the concrete infill to the former Artillery Store door and installation of a door;
- replacement of the existing infills to door, window and vent spaces with more appropriate structures, primarily to prevent the ingress of dust and ash from grass fires;
- surveying and mapping the site and its environs;
- relocating the powerlines away from the fort itself and reticulating power to the fort underground; and
- identifying and conserving the artefact collection.

All but the last required a significant archaeological component.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Visitor management strategies were developed for two sets of circumstances. The first related to visitor movement during practical work at the fort. The second sought to resolve issues for longer term visitor opportunities.

Visitor movement during siteworks

The peak visitor period is May to October. This is also the best time for fieldwork on Thursday Island. In November, the heat and wet season build up make fieldwork extremely trying. During the dry season, it is not unusual to have two or three groups of up to 30 tourists on site at a time.

Decisions had to be made whether to close the site off, provide tourists with an explanation of current work, or ignore them and hope the tour guide would provide the appropriate comments. Wherever possible the preference was to adopt the principle of providing as much information as possible, directly and informally, with due regard for safety. When there was light earthmoving machinery operating, it was obviously necessary to exclude visitors entirely, which was frequently more challenging than talking to them. Temporary safety barriers were often ignored unless there was an initial explanation about what was happening.

Guns conservation

Sandblasting the three six-inch guns necessitated some judicious juggling with barrier fences. A team member met each tour bus and explained which areas of the fort could be accessed and why. As an added safety precaution, there was always one of the project team on hand to deal with the casual visitor. It might have been simpler to close off the entire fort, but the underlying philosophy of maintaining optimal levels of access dictated otherwise.

External drains

One of the earliest archaeological tasks was to re-establish the original drains around the ramparts. An early sketch plan identified such two drains. One was adjacent to No. 3 gun where severe flooding occurred after storm rain (Figure 4). The other was north-east of the underground magazine. Site investigation identified the drain outlets from which they were backtracked into the fort. There had been considerable deposition over the years which had covered the original inlets. A small excavator was used to remove overburden in the areas predicted. At 300 to 400mm, the original iron grilles, still resting on their concrete surrounds, were uncovered (Figure 5). Subsequent archaeological work enabled the original drainage slopes to be re-established.

Visitors were able to view the work after an introductory talk. It was ad lib interpretation, but the reaction appeared to be one of general interest, if only to see conservation work being effected at a practical level. This kind of opportunity does not often arise. When it does, there is often a tendency to

Figure 4. Severe flooding adjacent to Gun No. 3 occurred after a storm in late 1998.
try to avoid any public explanation. But it is a critical part of the process of making archaeology more ‘real’ to the public. Seeing ‘the real thing’ is something of a treat. For those sweating in 35°C heat and liberally coated with dust that is somewhat harder to accept. But it is those opportunities that need to be seen and grasped if archaeology is to be accepted as an integral and practical element of modern society (Carter & Grimwade 1997).

Internal drains and artillery store door

The investigations within the underground magazine were, in contrast, not the kind of work that facilitated public viewing. The noise and the use of concrete cutters and jackhammers in a confined space presented obvious safety hazards. The work was associated with:
- repairs to the underfloor drains which were causing internal flooding; and
- removal of a concrete infill to the original artillery store.

In addition, the artillery store door, infilled during 1942, had to be restored. The 600mm thick reinforced concrete took four days to remove (Figure 6). Particular care was taken with removal of the concrete where it bonded into the original doorframe. Within the room was about 30m³ of refuse from the period the Bureau of Meteorology used the room as an incinerator. It was checked through and removed to the local refuse dump.

The underfloor drains were ‘mapped’ using a plumber’s ‘electric eel’ and rods. The 1912 plan of the site modifications seemed to indicate they ran beneath, or within, the underfloor warm air duct from the cordite room. As it turned out, this was not the case. The 1912 construction team had simply truncated the drainpipe with a 100mm bond beam and thus cut any drainage link from the magazine to the outside. The drains were part of a system Druitt had constructed to ensure the water soaking down past the magazine walls had somewhere to go. The 1912 plans were developed seemingly without realisation of this and made no allowance for them. This is somewhat surprising, because there was physical evidence of their existence by way of a floor drain inlet. The 1912 construction team, apparently, did not see any point in suggesting variations to the plans and specifications they had been given.

By the 1990s, soakage from heavy storms regularly caused flooding of the magazine. One can only wonder what had happened to the ammunition after the 1912 modifications. The limited documentary evidence does not reveal this as an issue.
Hillslopes

For most of the year, the hillslopes below the fort are covered in chest high grass. With monotonous regularity in about August each year, vandals burn it off. Once this spectacular blaze is over, the slopes reveal stark reminders that the defences were not simply contained within the ramparts. After the 1999 burn, it was possible to document over 1,200 artefacts and features in situ. Most related to the barbed wire fences (angle pickets). The pattern revealed by the survey demonstrates a marked correlation between the relict material and sketch plans from about 1900. In addition, numerous gun emplacements, possibly dating from the Second World War, remain in relatively good repair (Figure 7). There were also diverse scatters of domestic artefacts and the ubiquitous beer and champagne bottles.

Display of Progress

Work, such as the underfloor drainage, was not easily identifiable once completed. Drains are drains and anyone can paint a gun (even though that exercise cost $80,000) and cutting out a doorway does not look to be much once the rubble is removed. To provide a record of what was being done, a small photographic exhibition was developed in the display galleries. The result proved worthwhile. Many visitors have shown interest in the ‘before and after’ shots. For the management committee it provided an indication of what they have achieved as the project progresses.

Selected material from this display has been incorporated in a permanent interpretive sign to be erected in the fort grounds.

Long term visitor strategies

As a prelude to long term visitor management, two core elements had to be considered. First, where could visitors reasonably and safely be allowed to wander? Secondly, what were their main interests in visiting the site?

Critical to the first element were:

- safety: the hillslopes are steep and littered with loose rock, and archaeological deposits, including rusting iron posts and broken glass;
- time: visitors are usually on escorted tours and on-site time is limited;
- security: artefact deposits are extensive, worthy of in situ retention and needing more detailed research than is possible at this stage; and

- the need to provide a balanced interpretive experience as visitors need to gain a variety of quality experiences in a limited time.

The strategy developed focussed on having an interpretive trail within the fort and around the ramparts with a second one around the hillslopes and leading back into the fort near No. 3 gun (Carter 2000a). Displays focussing on military history and Green Hill Fort have been developed for the underground magazine areas.

Providing access to at least some parts of the hillslopes remains a challenge. The long-term goal is to provide an interpreted walking track along the eastern slopes following, in part, the inner line of barbed wire fence. Construction and maintenance costs will be high. This is primarily because of the terrain. Not only are the hillslopes steep but they contain an inordinate amount of loose rock—discards from the original construction lying among natural surface rock. A standard design walking track will impact visually and physically on the site in several places. In addition, edge strips to the track will need to be fire resistant. In the absence of adequate funding it is therefore proposed to interpret the slopes from within the fort.

VISITOR PROFILE

Galloway suggests there are ‘three types of visitors to a museum: streakers; stalkers; and students’ (Galloway 2000: 11). There is little reason to suggest site museums are any different. At Green Hill Fort most visitors are ‘streakers’. They are bus passengers on a tight schedule. But why did they come to the fort? What did they consider to be of particular interest?

A visitor survey was conducted with the assistance of the University of Queensland, Gatton in late 1999. Only a relatively small survey sample was possible (n = 44) and, while the results need to be considered with some caution, they are nonetheless indicative of visitor needs. Many of the comments have been verified subsequently through opportunistic discussions with visitors.

None of those surveyed came to TI for heritage related experiences. They came, rather, to experience ‘cultural exhibits’ (Torres Strait Islander culture?), the beaches and the fishing. Thursday Island was selected simply because it is the most northerly, easily accessible part of northeast Queensland. Twenty-five percent came because it was part of a tour package.

Notwithstanding those comments, several engaged in visits to Second World War sites and ‘visited heritage places’,
while none admitted to swimming on the beach.

Eighteen percent of the survey population were between 35 and 54 years of age. Children and pensioners were notably absent. The fort visit was highly regarded. Guide services were considered by 70 percent to have enhanced the experience. Despite the high heritage significance attributable to the fort, it was not considered the most interesting feature of the visit. The views from the fort rated marginally higher in importance (2.73 mean ranking on a s-point Linkert scale) than the underground magazines and the local history exhibits (2.75). The fortifications and the guns rated lower at 2.96 and 3.04 respectively. The apparent disinterest in the guns is probably because they are assumed to relate to World War 2. When their age was explained to individual visitors not surveyed, the interest level is significantly raised.

Of the original exhibits—most of which were oriented towards local history—it was pearl (2.03) and World War 2 (2.25) that had greatest interest. A lighthouse display, albeit cramped and poorly interpreted, rated lowest at 3.58. The most interesting elements of the exhibits were the photographs (1.97). The artefacts (3.45) and books (3.48) were considered least interesting, again probably because of the limited interpretation provided.

The survey concluded 'the initiative to upgrade interpretation and presentation of the Fort appears to be warranted based on visitor response to exhibits and features of the fort' (Carter 2000b: 31).

Future on-site interpretation will draw on the site's archaeology, historical research and on addressing visitor interests. Above ground there will be a series of interpretive panels placed at strategic locations to complement brochures and guided tours. In the magazine area, three galleries will address:

- the history of Australia's military forces and the development of fortifications;
- the history and archaeology of Green Hill Fort; and
- the contribution made by Torres Strait residents to Australia's defence.

The local history of Thursday Island will be, temporarily, displayed in the cooling plant room. Immediately above this will be a viewing platform providing visitors with interpretation of the natural environment and the panoramic views from the fort. Plans are being developed for a purpose-built interpretive facility for non-military history of the region. This will be a viewing platform providing visitors with interpretation of the natural environment and the panoramic views from the fort. Plans are being developed for a purpose-built interpretive facility for non-military history of the region. This is intended for erection beyond the fort entrance and adjacent to the existing car park.

CONCLUSION

Archaeology has an increasingly important role to play in the burgeoning cultural heritage tourism industry. To do this it must critically review its current position and move from an entrenched belief that the discipline's primary role is largely theoretical. One important area which can benefit from participation by archaeologists is in the project management level. The diversity of projects currently under way to celebrate the Centenary of Federation has provided several examples where applied archaeology is playing a significant role.

The Green Hill Fort project is one such conscious effort to apply archaeological and heritage management techniques to the enhancement of visitor experience. The active integration of archaeological investigation and research into the conservation and interpretation at Green Hill continues to support the premise that archaeology can, and does, have meaning and value into the twenty-first century. Archaeology does not need to continue to be hidebound in theoretical issues. It has an additional, emerging role to make the past more correctly understood by an increasingly interested and inquisitive public. If visitor experiences are to be enhanced through quality presentation, then archaeology must be seen as a key discipline in the process. Field archaeologists need to have a major role in the evolution of site museums and to gain appropriate skills in cross-disciplinary teamwork to be effective in such roles.

In today's competitive world, few would argue that, while marketing is a critical element, product quality is equally important. To achieve this it is essential the market is properly understood and the views of the public are appropriately addressed. Visitor expectations may not always equate with professional expectations. Put simply, the public may not necessarily want what we think they want. This is exemplified by the fact many tourists to Thursday Island are unaware of the existence and the history of Green Hill Fort; many assume it was built for the Second World War; and, most are unaware that there was ever a risk of Russians invading Australia. What many people come there for, initially, is simply a place to view the surrounding islands and the Strait.

As site managers, we have a responsibility to address visitor demand and to increase the "quality experience" by judiciously adding interpretive signs, enhancing tour guide information delivery, and providing a well-planned display to raise visitor awareness of the site's heritage values. It is important that archaeology is at the forefront to take up those challenges. Archaeology, and the presentation of that archaeology, needs to be sensitive, and responsive, to public opinions. It must recognise the value of the discipline in the practical management and presentation of cultural sites and needs to be proactive in engendering a better understanding of the role of archaeology in cultural heritage management.

The Green Hill Fort project has provided wide-ranging benefits. The problems of administering a major project in a particularly remote area can be challenging. Lack of what are often considered as basic commodities on the mainland may result in inordinate delays on TI. An archaeological perspective has proven invaluable in coordinating such a multidisciplinary project. It should also help ensure that archaeologists are appreciated and understood and the views of the public are appropriately addressed. Visitor expectations may not always equate with professional expectations. Put simply, the public may not necessarily want what we think they want. This is exemplified by the fact many tourists to Thursday Island are unaware of the existence and the history of Green Hill Fort; many assume it was built for the Second World War; and, most are unaware that there was ever a risk of Russians invading Australia. What many people come there for, initially, is simply a place to view the surrounding islands and the Strait.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Torres Strait Historical Society and Museums Association kindly agreed to the preparation of this paper which stems from Centenary of Federation Grants provided by both the Commonwealth and the Queensland Governments. Peter and Joan Grimwade and Bob O'Hara undertook invaluable research in the United Kingdom. Sandy Earle was extremely helpful in providing additional information in respect of Green Hill Fort's early history. Bill Carter, Irene Grimwade and Natalie Camp offered helpful comments on the text.

NOTES

1 Colonel Sir William F. Drummond Jervois (later Major General) had over 20 years experience in military engineering and fortifications when appointed to examine Australia's military needs. He became Inspector General of Fortifications and Secretary to the United Kingdom Defence Committee before being appointed as Chief Administrator, Straits Settlements (Nicholls 1988: 73). He left Singapore to take up his Australian appointment, at an annual salary of £1500, on 2 April 1877 (Q. V. & P. 1877: 813). He was variously Governor of South Australia and New Zealand.
Peter Scratchley was born in about 1834. After a career in the Royal Engineers he was appointed Commissioner of Defence to the Colonies and instructed to leave England on 8 March 1877 to await Jervois in Sydney. His remuneration was set at £1000 per annum (Q.V. & P. 1877:813). During his subsequent Army career Scratchley rose to the rank of Major General before retiring to take up an appointment as Governor of British New Guinea in 1884. He died at sea en route to Australia, in 1885.

Edward Dmitt was born in Dorset, England in 1859. He was commissioned Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers (UK) in January 1878. In 1889 he was seconded to the Queensland Defence Force where he worked on the construction of Kissing Point Fort (1889 to 1891) and Green Hill Fort (1891 to 1893) with the local rank of Major. Senior officers lauded his work at the time of his return to England where he was commissioned Major in 1896, Lieutenant Colonel in 1904 and Colonel in 1909. Dmitt was attached to the Board of Trade as Inspector of Railways for many years until retirement in 1909. He had married in 1889 prior to appointment to Queensland. He died, in Edinburgh, in July 1922 (Source: Public Records Office, Kew, UK and Royal Engineer's Museum, UK).

George Cryle, 1855–1926, a stonemason, migrated from Scotland in 1882. He worked with Dmitt at Townsville before moving to the Green Hill Fort. At the conclusion of that project Dmitt wrote of Cryle’s ‘most valuable services’ and recommended that the Government should ‘at some future time, when an opportunity occurs...reward him by further employment’ (M. D. 1893). In 1905 George Cryle inspected Green Hill Fort in his capacity of Inspector of Works, Department of Public Works (Cryle 1905). George Cryle went on to supervise erection of Victoria Bridge, Brisbane; Post Office, Warwick; and Custom’s House, Rockhampton (Watson & McKay 1994: 50).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


CRYLE, G. 1905. Material Repairs to Forts Thursday Island, Memo to District Architect, dated 26 September 1905.


SKENNERTON, I. 1989. 100 Years of Australian Service Machine Guns, I. D. Skennerton, Margate, Qld.