

# Giving value to the Australian historic past: Historical archaeology, heritage and nationalism

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*The material remains of Australia's colonial past were transformed from abandoned sites and forgotten relics into an 'archaeological record' in a process which seemed to emerge in the 1960s. Why did historical archaeology appear at this time? Was it simply imported, or did it emerge from local interests? Taking an 'ethnographic' and historical approach, and using both archival and interview data, the process of giving value to the material remains of Australia's historic past is explored. New concepts of heritage and archaeology combined with older traditions of valuing the environment within the context of Australia's 'new nationalism' of the 1960s and 1970s. Historical archaeology is based upon foundations of value and significance derived from a process which historicised the settler nation, valued the material remnants of the past and linked them to a historically continuous identity.*

## INTRODUCTION

A growing national maturity led to movements during the 1960s to preserve Australia's heritage across a wide spectrum. (Mulvaney & Kamminga 1999: 4)

Is it 'maturity' that leads a nation to be concerned about the preservation of the material remnants of its past? What indeed are the cultural processes that lead to some aspects of the material environment being singled out as worthy of respect, preservation and study, when this had not previously been the case?

I want to propose that the explanation for the emergence of historical archaeology, and of heritage more generally, as the result of a 'growing cultural awareness' arising from national maturity, is an interpretation grounded in the narrative mythologies of nationalism. Rather than an inevitable process of 'growing up', I suggest that the Australian historic, cultural and natural environments were given new forms of value within the milieu of a nation engaging with its colonial history and reacting against the psychological inheritance of imperialism: the 'cultural cringe'. This paper is drawn from a broader research project exploring the relationship between historical archaeology, heritage and nationalism in Australia (Ireland 2001). In this I developed an 'ethnographic' approach to the cultures of nationalism based upon detailed, historicised analyses of practice, discourse and institutions. My aim in this paper is not to produce a comprehensive history of the emergence of historical archaeology in Australia. Rather I aim to produce a number of 'thick descriptions' of specific historical situations where discourses of value relating to archaeology and heritage can be explored. I am interested in drawing out the foundational discourses which have allowed the category of historical archaeology to be articulated. The case studies presented in this paper are drawn from New South Wales, and while I have contextualised this material to some extent, comparisons with other regions would no doubt reveal interesting similarities and differences in the construction of archaeological and heritage values within the larger framework of the nation.

To understand the power and pervasiveness of nationalism in the contemporary world it must be understood as an identity project, a project which remains relevant and vital within the context of globalisation. In Australia, nationalism is a fragmented, inconsistent discourse, and it is negotiated and contested in overt political debates, such as Australia's 'history wars' (Birch 1997; Curthoys 1999). However such positions are enabled through more subtle structures and discourses which are enacted daily, through forms of knowledge which appear to be objective and natural concepts. This idea, of

nation as a discourse which is constitutive of, and constituted through cultural practice in ordinary and everyday situations, sits somewhat uneasily with the term 'nationalism' and its history of use to describe more narrow political doctrines. This is the problem Bhabha refers to when he suggests that the history of this term is a barrier to really understanding nationalism, which he describes as a 'ubiquitous form of living the locality of culture' (Bhabha 1990: 291).

An important feature of the culture of nationalism is its obsession with history and historic origins (Jenkins 1995). History provides the idealised, mythologised and emotionally charged benchmarks around which nationalism's vision for the future can be built. Within culture then, nationalism can be seen as a project to create and sustain particular types of collective identity, and this involves infinite political contests over the limits, symbolic content and future implications of that identity (Stokes 1997: 10). This inevitably attributes a crucial role to archaeologists, historians and heritage managers who deal in representations of the national past. A central issue here is that, within the cultures of modernity, nationalism, historical consciousness and understandings of identity have a fundamental, mutually constitutive relationship. Archaeology and history are not natural, neutral and autonomous ways of looking at the past, but arise, along with nationalism, from modernist understandings of identity as continuous over time and generations, and as the basis for the formation and cohesion of communities. The notion that identity is continuous through time is an entrenched concept, however as the anthropologist Thomas Eriksen has claimed:

...perhaps they [identities] only seem continuous and our analytical task consists in showing that they are not, and that the very notion that people ought to be concerned with the past is an ideological child of the age of nationalism. (Eriksen 1993: 96)

I want to look here at the way in which discourses of value were constructed to attribute meaning and significance to the material remains of colonial history in Australia. Although a new kind of archaeological practice for Australia emerged from this process (i.e. historical archaeology), the discourses of value used were not completely new but founded upon a variety of ways of knowing the past. Recent research has shown that the heritage movement of the 1960s and 1970s was based upon traditions of environmental concern, historic preservation, collecting, local history and national heritage which stretched back into the later nineteenth century (Bonyhady 1996; Griffiths 1996; Healy 1997). Bennett's work however, has focussed on the nationalisation of the past in Australia in

the 1960s and 1970s, seeing this period of the 'new nationalism' as creating a radical new set of 'past-present alignments' in Australian cultural and political discourse (Wright 1984: 512). Bennett shows very clearly that the significance of historic sites and objects depends not upon their authenticity or accuracy in representing the past as it really was, but upon:

...their position within and relations to the presently existing field of historical discourses and their associated social and ideological affiliations... (Bennett 1995: 147)

In particular Bennett shows how the concept of the 'National Estate', the term adopted by the Whitlam administration to describe Australia's cultural and natural heritage, serves to meld Australian cultural and natural history into a unity, a uniquely national story which de-emphasises both internal complexities and external entanglements, including that with Britain. The incorporation of natural and cultural features from before 1901, when Australia became a nation, including the evidence of Aboriginal prehistory and the geology, flora and fauna of the continent, serves to:

...wrench those artefacts from the histories to which they were earlier connected—those of Empire, for example—and thus to back project the national past beyond the point of its effective continuity. (Bennett 1995: 148)

Bennett's approach has been criticised for failing to adequately historicise the heritage discourses which emerged in this period and which contributed to the flurry of (settler) heritage legislation and cultural policy created in the 1970s and 1980s (Griffiths 1996: 195; Healy 1997: 93). The work of Healy and Griffiths provides a nuanced historical analysis of the diversity of heritage discourses and practices which were in flux in this period. To focus on state cultural policy and the large state cultural institutions such as museums, as Bennett does, may seem to overstate the 'real life' effects of the government's heavy-handed nationalistic rhetoric in the field of heritage. However in Australia the nation and its history is consistently, almost unquestioningly, articulated through heritage discourses as the crucial source of community identity. By examining the attribution of value to the material remnants of the national and colonial pasts, now seen as historical archaeological sites and objects, I want to explore the intellectual and cultural genealogies of the knowledge that enabled this nationalisation of the past.

## AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Before exploring discourses of value and their context within the culture of nationalism I want to expand upon the history of historical archaeology in Australia as a background to the subsequent discussion. Several studies of the development of Australian historical archaeology have now been written and they form an important basis for my study (see for instance Birmingham & Murray 1987; Jack 1985; 1996; Murray & Allen 1986; Connah 1988; Temple 1988; Stuart 1992; Egloff 1994; Lydon 1995; Mulvaney 1996; Paterson & Wilson 2000). In 1974 the first university courses in historical archaeology were introduced at the University of Sydney through the determination of an archaeologist, Judy Birmingham and a historian, Ian Jack. The establishment of this course was not universally supported; in fact Birmingham and Jack acted against the wishes of their respective departmental heads. Helen Temple has investigated this history of historical archaeology in NSW and claims that the lack of prestige accorded to historical archaeological work by Australian archaeologists who worked overseas, has had a prolonged effect on the practice and its practitioners (Temple 1988: 55). The story of historical archaeology in Australia is often articulated as a slow quest for public and academic recognition, and towards disciplinary maturity.

Similar concerns regarding the prestige accorded to historical archaeology in the USA have been voiced, and worldwide, 'the archaeology of the recent' still appears to many to be an oxymoron (Orser 1996: 2). However, rather than being seen as a slow journey towards recognition, this process of valuing, professionalising and institutionalising the Australian past has in fact been spectacularly condensed. It is important to note that although Near Eastern and Classical archaeology had been taught at the University of Sydney since the 1940s (O'Hea 2000: 75), the first PhD in history at an Australian university was granted in 1947 and the first chair in Australian history was created in 1949 (Griffiths 1996: 213). John Mulvaney taught the first course in the prehistory of the Australian region in 1957 (Mulvaney 1996: 3). The journey from a nation with no history to one with a history and archaeology, occurred within just a few decades.

Also in 1974, the Hope Inquiry into the National Estate reported to the Federal Government for the first time on the nature of Australia's heritage. Historic sites (including the concept of historical archaeological sites) were recognised in this report and it was recommended that the States introduce legislation to protect them (Hope 1974: 176). So what had led up to this critical date in the formalisation and institutionalisation of historical archaeology? Mulvaney draws attention to the expansion of Australian universities through the late 1950s and 1960s which drew numbers of overseas-trained archaeologists to Australia and expanded the teaching of archaeology in general (Mulvaney 1996: 3). An expansion in the teaching of archaeology not only saw some archaeologists become interested in the research questions raised by Australian historic sites (see for instance Allen 1973; Birmingham 1971, 1976), but also a demand for student training in the field (Jack 1985: 157). Further, Mulvaney and others acknowledge the context of emerging Australian cultural issues, including heritage, history, environmental conservation and urban amenity (Mulvaney 1996).

The 1960s saw a range of activities that built up a constituency for and awareness of historical archaeology. Mulvaney encouraged Campbell Macknight and Jim Allen in their postgraduate research into historic sites in Arnhem Land (Allen 1969; Macknight 1976). Judy Birmingham and her colleagues at the University of Sydney involved students and volunteers in excavations at Irrawang, north of Sydney, and Wybalenna, on Flinders Island, off Tasmania (Birmingham 1976, 1992). In Victoria, Bill Culican from the University of Melbourne led volunteers from the Archaeological Society of Victoria in excavating the Fossil Beach Cement Works on the Mornington Peninsula (Culican & Taylor 1972). The Australian Society for Historical Archaeology was formed in 1970 with an aim of encouraging public interest in the subject, and it remains a non-professional society which is open to any devotee (Temple 1988: 60).

Following the Hope Inquiry into the National Estate, a Project Co-ordination Committee on Historical Archaeology was established to advise on how to develop a comprehensive list of historical archaeological sites in Australia (Allen 1978). The thematic approach developed by this committee would be influential in heritage management through the decades to come. Although the Commonwealth established its Australian Heritage Commission in 1975, and initiated the Register of the National Estate and the National Estate Grants Program, the 'national parliament (did) not have plenary powers to legislate in respect of all matters for the whole of Australia' (Allen 1978: A7). This legislative issue, sometimes referred to as 'States' rights', is perhaps one of the defining characteristics for Australian political history through the twentieth century. It means that although definitive statements about heritage were made by the Commonwealth through the creation of the Australian Heritage Commission, its power over the States was very limited and heritage conservation work therefore developed in highly regionalised traditions.

Tasmania for instance, formed an important focus for early heritage conservation projects, particularly on convict sites such as Port Arthur. However heritage legislation to protect historic sites was not passed in Tasmania until 1995 (*Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*). The development of legislation by the States specifically designed to protect historical archaeological relics occurred first in South Australia in 1965, in the *Aboriginal and Historic Relics and Preservation Act*. Although in Victoria the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972* was used to control activities on historical archaeological sites, it was not initially intended for this purpose and its use on historic sites was limited (Pearson & Sullivan 1995: 71; Stuart 1987: 11).

In NSW the *Heritage Act 1977* resulted in a boom in urban historical archaeology in particular, as compliance with, and tenacious administration of its archaeological provisions was undertaken through the late 1970s and 1980s (Temple 1988; Birmingham 1990; Lydon 1993; Johnson n.d.; NSW Department of Planning 1989). However excavation only accounted for a small proportion of the work done by historical archaeologists, most of whom, from the 1970s to the present, have worked in government heritage agencies or as free-lance consultants, with a small, but recently expanded, university base (Mackay & Karskens 1999: 110). Survey, historical and archival research, detailed structural recording and building analysis concerning industrial sites and vernacular architecture, industrial processes reconstruction, landscape and urban environment studies all constitute important research methodologies in Australian historical archaeology. Amateur and academic interest in industrial archaeology has been an important focus for historical archaeology and I will go on to look at the activities of the NSW National Trust's Industrial Archaeology Committee formed in 1968 (and see Paterson & Wilson 2000: 84).

Overall subject trends in historical archaeology have recently been analysed by Paterson and Wilson based on a review of published material and theses (Paterson & Wilson 2000). In general terms the convict period, nineteenth-century urban sites, sites associated with the Chinese, pastoral, mining and other industrial sites have been some of the major foci for historical archaeological research. While sites of Aboriginal and settler contact were an early interest for historical archaeology (see for instance Allen 1969 and Birmingham 1992 on the Wybalenna project undertaken in the 1960s), this subject appeared to remain almost dormant until its marked florescence in the later 1990s (Colley & Bickford 1996; Murray 1996b; and on new approaches to this subject see Harrison & Paterson 2000; Torrence & Clark 2000). This is perhaps the clearest example of the transformation of archaeological research through identity politics and community interests (and see Ireland 2001: 222 ff. for a fuller discussion of these issues).

## VALUING THINGS

Griffiths and Davison have argued that what was new about the heritage movement of the 1960s and 1970s was not its nationalistic focus, as heritage and nationalism can be seen to have been strongly linked in the nineteenth century, but the redefinition of heritage as a material rather than a spiritual concept (Davison 1991b: 7; Griffiths 1996: 195). A material heritage obviously requires collecting, curation, conservation and empirical analyses in ways that are significantly different from spiritual, religious, literary, linguistic and political heritages. Lowenthal succinctly defines the origins of the desire to preserve material things:

The urge to preserve derives from several interrelated presumptions: that the past was unlike the present; that its relics are necessary to our identity and desirable in themselves; and that tangible remains are a finite and dwindling commodity. (Lowenthal 1985: 389)

Heritage discourses claim a crucial role for the material

relics of the past, as the vehicles for tradition in culture. They suggest that without the presence of visible, material reminders of the past, cultural continuity will be impaired, leading to the loss of distinctive, historically based identities. In many ways, heritage conservation sees the material things themselves as vessels containing cultural meanings which remain static over time. In a similar way, archaeological epistemology sees the materiality of archaeological data as the physical embodiment of research potential: a thing, as long as it exists, can be analysed in endless new ways. As Lowenthal has argued, most preservationist discourses have a relationship to experiences of accelerated social and environmental change. The impact of two world wars, industrialisation, urban redevelopment and scientific progress in the twentieth century have all contributed to the rise of preservationist discourses. However, as Lowenthal, and in the Australian context Griffiths, have both pointed out, earlier traditions of environmental concern and preservation movements are to be found throughout the western world (Griffiths 1996; Lowenthal 1985; and see also Schama 1996 and Grove 1995).

Historians of the museum agree that there were no major museum collections of historic objects in Australia before the First World War, despite the fact that large museums were established throughout Australia in the nineteenth century (see for instance Anderson & Reeves 1994). This phenomenon has been interpreted in several different ways: as an absence of interest in history; as a feeling that the history of Australia was insubstantial and lacking in heroic content; or as a focus on the youth of Australia, which meant that history was yet to happen (Healy 1997: 87). Healy and Griffiths suggest however, that there were some significant practices concerned with historical consciousness in nineteenth-century Australia. However these practices are less well recognised or understood now because they do not conform to the nationally defined histories which became so dominant through the twentieth century (Healy 1997: 87). The fact that there was only minor interest in Australian historical objects in museums in the nineteenth century, and that this interest grew steadily throughout the twentieth century, following the creation of the nation in 1901, suggests that nationhood and nationalism created a new form of historical consciousness in Australia which has obscured earlier and non-national forms of social memory.

The collection of documents concerning Australia's history was a practice that was enthusiastically pursued through the nineteenth century. Healy interprets this concern with documentary evidence as a robust sense of *modern* historicism, which emphasised the role of history-writing and documentary sources for the colonial enterprise. In Europe, Healy claims, objects were collected and valued as relics of *pre-modern* times, in the spirit of eighteenth-century antiquarianism (Healy 1997: 91). Such a practice was therefore simply not relevant to a colony born into science and modernity, except, perhaps, for the curious relics of Australia's prehistory.

The urge to collect and categorise Indigenous cultural objects was a significant feature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialism (Griffiths 1996; Thomas 1991; Thomas 1994; Neville 1997). It is usually seen as connected to a heterogeneous range of colonial and scientific collecting practices ranging from travelers mementos to scientific evidence (Healy 1997: 96; and see Thomas 1991). Colonial interest in Aboriginal people was partly an extension of interest in the natural environment, and partly construed as a chance to observe a relict stone age and its evolutionary 'specimens'. We must be aware that these colonial practices encompassed a huge range of motivations, interests, human relationships and negotiations (Griffiths 1996; Mulvaney 1989; Thomas 1994). However in the Australian context it has generally been accepted that these practices were in no way *historical*.

However this collecting *can* be seen as historical in some ways. Not in ways which have to do with Aboriginal history,

but more to do with a white 'history and geography of possession', a collecting practice linked to white historical narratives of progress, evolution, technology and settlement. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century antiquarian collecting of Aboriginal material culture therefore bears no relationship to interest in the 'Australian people and their cultural identity' which was developing at this time and from which Aboriginal people were originally excluded. It should rather be seen as a practice which was performed in the settler community as a material expression of local history, of ownership and, at times, of a deeply felt passion and attachment towards their colonial territory. This aspect of this practice is less obvious in the context of the great Australian colonial museums where collections might be displayed taxonomically alongside plants, animals and minerals. At a local or individual level however, the objects' context within these grand imperial narratives is replaced with a more intimate local historical and environmental context. If we look at the rage for collecting Indigenous objects in this way, then it is perhaps this nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century amateur collecting that is the direct colonial precursor to the new forms of 'Australiana' and local history collecting which grew enormously in popularity in the second half of the twentieth century.

Healy also considers the practice of collecting items related to the pioneer histories of districts by settler families and communities through the later-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argues that these collections were not originally antiquarian in nature, nor tied to larger narratives of empire, state or nation. Rather they acted as 'mnemonic devices—collected so that intimate stories of beginnings, of place and of family, could be told' (Healy 1997: 104). As we have seen, an antiquarian interest in objects from the past requires a significant sense of rupture between the present and the past, a sense of threat to the survival of its relics, and a belief in a historically continuous identity (Lowenthal 1985). The 1975 Pigott Report into *Museums in Australia* records a proliferation of local museums in the 1960s and links this with an intense interest in a 'separate' Australian identity and with the 'new nationalism' (Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections 1975). We could also see this as the 'new antiquarianism', brought about through nationalism's dual tendency to mythologise historic origins, while simultaneously focusing on the nation's future trajectory and development (McClintock 1994). This combination creates the sense of rupture with the past, the sense that its relics are threatened by inevitable modernisation and development, and the necessary concept that these relics represent a shared historical identity. What was new about this nationalism, claims Griffiths, was this kind of local expression of concepts about a national identity (Griffiths 1996: 220). Indigenous objects, such as stone tools and grindstones, often formed the 'baseline' for local, pioneer museums—they documented the march of progress, the modernisation of the land and the absence of the people who produced them in 'prehistory' (see for instance the Gulgong Pioneer's Museum collection illustrated in Baglin & Wheelhouse 1981: 124; and see Mauldon & Witcomb 1996). As Aboriginal archaeology was professionalised, collecting by amateurs made illegal, and as Aboriginal groups began to successfully assert their ownership of their cultural heritage, the settlers' 'antiquarian imagination' was increasingly captured by the material relics of colonial history. However, these local stories of origins were recast in terms of nationalist narratives, asserting not just a local, but an 'Australian' identity.

## THE NSW NATIONAL TRUST

We can look at the history of this concern for colonial relics and historic objects in the activities of the non-government organisation, the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in the 1960s and 1970s. Following the model of the English National Trust, the NSW organisation was an amateur group. The NSW

National Trust was launched in Sydney in 1947, making it only the third of such organisations to be created worldwide, following England and Scotland (Anon. 1987: 9). While primarily associated with the preservation of Australia's famous examples of Georgian architecture, the origins of the National Trust movement in NSW are to be found in broad-based environmental concerns. The Trust's founder, Annie Wyatt, had been involved with *The Tree Lover's Civic League* and the *Forest Advisory Council* since the 1920s (Anon. 1987: 9). In 1943 Annie Wyatt wrote:

I am convinced that had we had such an institution (as the National Trust) in Australia the nation would already have been richer... It is only by cherishing such treasures that we can hope to evolve a National Soul. (Anon. 1987: 9)

The escalation of interest in these issues is reflected in the growth of membership of the Trust: from 500 members in 1953, to 2 000 in 1960, 10 000 in 1968 to 20 000 in 1973 (Anon. 1987: 10). The purview of the Trust was broad, covering landscapes and natural areas, buildings, Aboriginal 'relics' and other objects. From the outset the Trust aimed at influencing governments especially in the creation of conservation and planning legislation, and it chose influential barristers and judges to lead the organisation (Anon. 1987: 9).

The Trust was heavily influenced by the scope and policies of the National Trust in England and it acted as an important source of communication between Australia and the United Kingdom on conservation issues. The Trust Bulletin of the 1960s frequently mentions members' visits to Europe and the United Kingdom, as well as talks from visiting British heritage experts. By the 1960s the Trust had a broad range of advisory committees on buildings and landscapes, but also on relics, sites and objects, which were covered by the Aboriginal Relics Advisory Panel, the Portable Antiquities Advisory Panel, and the latest to be formed in 1968, the Industrial Archaeology Committee. The roles of these panels and committees was to be fundamentally disrupted over the following decades which saw the creation of heritage legislation and government institutions concerning heritage. However in the 1960s they reflected these older, broader traditions of environmental concern, preservation interests and colonial collecting. The re-structuring of the 'national past' disrupted the role of the Trust in NSW and it had to re-group in the 1980s to bring itself into line with new policies and pressures for professionalisation in heritage (Temple 1988: 43).

The NSW National Trust's role in lobbying for the protection of Aboriginal relics has not been widely acknowledged in recent reviews of the creation of Aboriginal heritage legislation (see for instance Byrne 1996 and Smith 2000). The NSW Trust, following the English Trust, was broadly concerned with the quality of the environment. Aboriginal sites and relics were seen as a unique and scientifically significant aspect of the environment, and it was within this context that they came within its area of concern. The chair of the Aboriginal Relics Panel was F. D. McCarthy, the Curator of Anthropology of the Australian Museum, who had been involved in lobbying governments for protection of Aboriginal relics since the 1930s (Smith 2000: 110; McCarthy 1962: 4). The National Trust had been delegated some responsibilities for protecting Aboriginal relics in NSW through its Act of Incorporation in 1960. The concept of Aboriginal relics as a component of the national heritage is clearly articulated by McCarthy for the Trust's membership in 1962:

The need for the protection of aboriginal [sic] relics *in situ* is recognized by most citizens, apart from the vandals. Engravings and paintings in particular, stone arrangements and carved trees, illustrate the mythology and art of the now extinct or civilized Aborigines. They are the work of the first people to occupy Australia, and

they fill an important niche in our national culture. But protection of such relics is difficult in a young growing country in which the white man has not lived long enough to establish a tradition or public conscious about national relics, where the people as a whole are too busy working and enjoying themselves to think seriously of relics, while the Aborigines themselves are still a social problem. (McCarthy 1962: 4)

In this article McCarthy refers not only to vandals, but also to the increasing pace of urban expansion and development as the major threat to the conservation of Aboriginal relics. Whereas in archaeological and anthropological fora the threat from untrained amateurs and treasure seekers is often stressed, it is interesting that in this context McCarthy stresses the national cultural significance of Aboriginal relics. Byrne (1996) and Smith (2000) have recently questioned the central importance accorded to archaeologists in achieving protective legislation for Aboriginal sites, arguing that it was more the growth of heritage discourse that changed community receptivity to the issues they were raising. What is of concern here is that, as Bonyhady has clearly outlined, Aboriginal sites and relics had been part of this broader discourse of environmental concern since the turn of the twentieth century (Bonyhady 1996: 158). It hardly needs restating here that, through this period, while Aboriginal antiquities were incorporated within the concept of a national inheritance, Aboriginal people themselves were not seen to have an active role in the national future.

In the later Hope Inquiry (1974), Aboriginal archaeological sites and historic (archaeological) sites were grouped together with other areas of special scientific interest, such as caves and geological formations, to form a distinct category of the National Estate. This was perhaps influenced to some extent by the early South Australian legislation (1965) which protected both Aboriginal and historic archaeological relics (Hope 1974: 35). This legislation and the Hope Inquiry both reflect this tradition of seeing archaeological sites as part of the natural environment and in the context of science. The growing impact of Aboriginal-rights movements and the re-claiming by Aboriginal people of their cultural heritage is a process that was already underway when the Hope report was prepared, a process with which its authors appear to have had all sympathy. But the Hope Inquiry did see the past as radically separated from the present: archaeological sites are clearly not seen as aspects of contemporary culture, but as belonging in the domain of the scientist for the benefit of universal knowledge. This situation, which is certainly not specific to the Hope Inquiry but is a feature of heritage discourses developed in Europe and the USA in the 1960s, had a critical impact on the practice of Australian archaeology. Indigenous involvement in heritage, and the specialisation of prehistory and anthropology, has increased the separation of Aboriginal heritage management to within specialist agencies. As Indigenous involvement and control of heritage has increased, so, necessarily, has its incorporation within nationalist discourse to produce what Byrne has termed the 'deep nation' (Byrne 1996). As Smith points out, to allow otherwise would challenge the unity and legitimacy of the nation (Smith 2000).

In 1969 McCarthy's concerns for Aboriginal relics were finally reflected in amendments to the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act* and he subsequently focused his advisory activities upon that organisation. The incorporation of Aboriginal heritage within an organisation chiefly concerned with environmental management and flora and fauna protection reflects the tradition of seeing Aboriginal sites and relics as part of the environment. In this decade (1960s) then, we see a fundamental change in traditions of environmental concern and the new discourses of heritage. Aboriginal sites and relics become a specialist area of heritage, an area professionalised by the expanding discipline of Aboriginal archaeology (prehistory). Historical archaeological sites *might* have been managed

together with Aboriginal archaeological sites had the categories of the 1974 Hope Inquiry been translated into legislation. That is, had their archaeological character, or the use of archaeological methodologies, been seen as a more important commonality than the cultural differences represented, then perhaps we would have seen more heritage legislation such as the 1965 South Australian *Aboriginal and Historic Relics Act*. However an overwhelming trend towards separation has been the case. In Victoria for instance, the Victorian Archaeological Survey (VAS) was involved with historical archaeology and 'prehistory' through the 1970s and 1980s, providing an unusual example where archaeologists, including maritime archaeologists, worked together within a single heritage-management agency. However in the 1990s, changes to legislation saw the termination of VAS and the creation of a new Heritage Act (1995), to deal with historic cultural heritage, which is very similar to NSW's *Heritage Act 1977*. Aboriginal heritage issues were then managed from within Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. This is one area where we can see a transformation in the concept of the national heritage and, as a result, a shift in the National Trust's focus away from Aboriginal sites as part of the environment, towards a more defined engagement with settler history. Just as Aboriginal sites had been seen as an aspect of a treasured landscape, so had historic buildings. However the need to manage, study and protect this landscape through legislation required its dissection into specialist categories.

I will now turn to another area of Trust activity in the 1960s where we can see the operation of discourses of value closely linked to historical archaeology. I have already mentioned briefly the rise in local history collecting in the 1960s and its formation around popular national narratives of pioneering. Concurrent with local history collecting was a growing professional interest in Australian collecting. Kevin Fahy, a member of the National Trust's Portable Antiquities Panel, the Old Government House and Experiment Farm Cottage Committees, and the later Curatorial Panel, recalled that:

The whole business of collecting Australianiana emanated from what the National Trust was doing at Experiment Farm Cottage and then Old Government House in the 1960s and early 1970s...When I was at university though (in the 1950s) archaeologists were all interested in prehistory and classical archaeology. Nobody had thought of exploring the Australian environment for evidence of what had happened here... (Anon. 1985: 8)

Fahy, a graduate in history and archaeology from the University of Sydney, used his skills in material culture to pursue what he saw as the neglected subject of Australian arts and crafts. The Committees of which he was a member oversaw the sourcing and purchasing of items to furnish and decorate the two historic properties mentioned above, owned by the National Trust and located in the west of Sydney. In 1964 the National Trust launched a campaign called 'Towards a National Historical or Folk Museum' encouraging members to donate items of Australianiana (Anon. 1964: 6). The Trust's policy in the 1960s was to develop a series of museums representing the major periods of Australia's early colonial period. The Georgian period was to be represented at Old Government House in Parramatta, Regency at Elizabeth Bay House and Early Victorian at Lindesay (the latter two are mansions close to the harbour in Sydney's eastern suburbs). The Trust intended to house the 'folk collection' in a country property (pers. comm. Ian Stephenson). Its aim was to show more about how 'ordinary people' lived in contrast to the very grand mansions the Trust owned in Sydney. The cause of the folk collection was taken up by Mrs Jessie Scotford who had traveled to Scandinavia to look at their folk museums. Mrs Scotford collected mostly textiles and costume (pers. comm. Ian Stephenson).

The Trust's grand museums vision did not come to fruition, although it still owns and opens to the public a range of proper-



ties. This was partly due to the growing professionalisation and compartmentalisation of heritage, including museums, as legislation and state institutions controlling heritage were introduced. Community-based activities were directly affected by the huge new commitments made by the State in matters of cultural heritage. Sydney's Powerhouse Museum (formerly the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) opened in 1988, after developing new 'social history' collections, and the Historic Houses Trust of NSW was created in 1980 to take over the management of Elizabeth Bay House (O'Brien 1998). The grand programs initiated by the Trust, in the lead up to the celebration of the Bicentenary in 1988, were perhaps more than the structure and administration of this kind of community organisation, with large numbers of consultative committees, could accommodate; and the NSW government later appointed an administrator to sort out an accumulation of debt (Davison 1991a: 27). Nonetheless, in the 1960s the Trust was the focus for heritage conservation in NSW (Temple 1988: 43). It is also clear that at that time rigid distinctions were not made between heritage issues. Rather, it was a process of valuing the local, in ways that were inspired by all kinds of heritage projects around the world, from Iron Bridge Gorge in Britain, to Scandinavian folk museums. But the local was clearly also seen as national, and represented by an entwinement of history, culture and environment.

An area of particular interest to Australian expert Kevin Fahy was Australian ceramics (Fahy 1967). Ceramics were also a special area of interest for Judy Birmingham, mentioned earlier as one of the initiators of historical archaeology courses at the University of Sydney in 1974. Fahy's 'nurturing' interest in the new area of historical archaeology is recounted here:

Kevin was one of the pioneers of historical archaeology in this country. He proved his point by locating traces of the old Irrawang Pottery... From those beginnings he says, historical archaeology here has gone from strength to strength. And at the same time Australian antiques have become more highly valued for aesthetic as well as historical reasons. (Anon. 1985: 8)

The Irrawang site was excavated by Judy Birmingham and students from the University of Sydney from 1967 and throughout the early 1970s (Birmingham 1976). The site was of particular interest as it was an early (1840s), entrepreneurial attempt at supplying cheap, domestic pottery to the New South Wales market. Perhaps of greatest interest to Birmingham were the issues of industrialisation and the process of adapting technologies to the colonial situation, interests she was to pursue over the next two decades both academically and with the Trust's Industrial Archaeology Committee (see for instance Birmingham 1976; Birmingham & Jeans 1983). In Birmingham and Fahy's review of early Australian pottery we can appreciate the great curiosity that developed as these kinds of questions about Australian history and material culture were asked for the first time (Birmingham & Fahy 1971). The *Newsletter of the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology*, which started in 1971, shows that connections were sought out with all manner of experts and members published brief snippets of research in progress. Such information sharing is no longer possible in the professionalised and commercialised field of historical archaeology.

In this local situation we can see some of the activities and relationships that were beginning to combine to enable notions of value to be articulated for the material relics of Australia's history. It is evident that archaeological discourses were a part of this valuing process, and I will turn to this aspect next. However it is important to see that it was not archaeological discourses alone that were constitutive of concepts of value around Australian historic sites and relics. Nor was the relationship between archaeology and aspects of nationalism created through the controlling power of institutions or

nationalistic individuals. In this case we see material things and Australian identity becoming linked in new ways through a range of discourses and processes. One process eventually linked Aboriginal cultural material (relics) to contemporary Aboriginal identity, another developed the concept that the objects and places created by settlers could tell stories about learning to live in a new land and the sort of people and nation this experience created.

## AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF VALUE

Tim Murray has written that while we know that:

Aboriginal sites and contexts were protected before European ones (in legislation)... existing research has not explained why this happened, nor what this might mean for the relative significance of the two types of cultural heritage'. (Murray 1996a: 729)

The answer to this problem lies in an understanding of how a material heritage is linked to both science and a concept of a historically continuous identity. Alain Schnapp has argued that in contrast to most other parts of Europe, French archaeology hardly developed in the nineteenth century and a law on antiquities was not passed until 1941 during the Vichy regime. He explains this time lag behind other parts of Europe by the fact that antiquarian intellectual activity in France and about France concentrated on history and culture, rather than on issues of race or *ethnie*, which were the focus for archaeological and antiquarian studies in Germany and Scandinavia for instance (Schnapp 1996: 49). This explanation for the taking up of modern archaeological and preservationist practices has some interesting parallels with the Australian context. Intellectual interest in the nature and definition of 'Australianess' has also been essentially the domain of the historian, the political and cultural commentator. Although the newly created nation of 1901 unambiguously declared that it was founded on race, the definition of race was usefully ambiguous: described as British or even more broadly as 'the white race'. Historical, literary and artistic projects of the late-nineteenth century and through the twentieth century concentrated on how the combination of history and environment forged a new kind of people from British stock: people who were 'racially' British but possessed of a unique, new Australian *character* (Ireland 2001: 46 ff. and Ireland forthcoming). The intellectual interest here was in understanding the historical development of a 'character' and in its cultural expression. Issues of race and ethnicity have always been central to the Australian nation, a nation of migrants, but these issues were not linked to Australian soil, but to the historic territories of Asia and the Old World.

Of course with the Mabo High Court decision in 1992, issues of race and land have become legally linked in the context of the national territory, making the archaeological and anthropological authentication of the histories of traditional owners more politically contentious than ever before. However what some have described as the relative 'lateness' of the passing of settler heritage laws in Australia may relate to the fact that interest in the cultural *patrimony* in Australia, as in France, centred on issues of the settler cultural and historical identity, or national character: racial and ethnic differences *within* that mainstream national identity were not an explicit focus.

It was the rise of preservationist concerns that encouraged the exploration of issues of 'Australianess' in a material and environmental context, and as we have seen, the *material* culture of settler Australia was a mystery to be researched in the 1960s. However it has been shown that 'prehistoric' archaeology was built upon amateur traditions of collecting and antiquarianism, colonial science and anthropology in a way that settler heritage obviously was not. The lobbying of prehistorians and anthropologists such as McCarthy, stressed the world-class scientific importance of ancient sites, not their importance to Aboriginal people as a cultural heritage. In fact,

if the concept that Aboriginal sites and relics might be related to contemporary Aboriginal identity had been more developed in the 1960s, then perhaps governments would have been far more conservative in passing legislation to protect Indigenous sites, and we might have seen settler heritage protected before Indigenous heritage.

Historical archaeology may have formed around an archaeological epistemology but its data were created through the linking of identity, environment and material remains as a cultural heritage. The idea of a material heritage gave archaeological methodologies, such as survey, description and classification, an obvious and useful role in the newly defined heritage movement. Griffiths claims that an 'archaeological sense of the past', a belief that scientific methodologies may be used to recover material remnants and decode their meaning, is integral to the nature of the modern preservation movement (Griffiths 1996: 196). Indeed the growth and popularisation of archaeology in the 1950s in Britain and the USA for example, should not be seen simply as the result of a growing interest in the past, but as a discourse which has subsequently shaped notions about how the past can be known (see for instance Daniel 1981: 121). This linking of materiality with heritage ensured that archaeology as a practice became more deeply involved in the discourse of heritage, and of course in the doing of heritage-management work, than was the case with the related disciplines of history and anthropology (Byrne 1996: 101).

## THE NSW INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY COMMITTEE

While some of the earliest historical archaeological exercises were based on excavation (see for instance Allen 1973; Birmingham 1976, 1992; Culican and Taylor 1972), the 1970s saw a concentration on survey and inventory work, much of it carried out with Commonwealth National Estate Grant Funding (see Ireland 2001: 145 ff. for a full account of the role of this program). This practice was based on the concept that the database of historical archaeology was not only unknown, but also under threat from development, modern progress, 'cultural globalisation', or perhaps more specifically, Americanisation. Unlike its role with Aboriginal relics discussed above, the NSW National Trust's Industrial Archaeology Committee, formed in 1968, has remained active to the present. After initial meetings in 1968, the Committee published a 'statement of purpose' in 1969. Surveying, recording, making recommendations for preservation and raising public awareness about 'the part played by certain industries in the history of the State', were the main aims of the group (Anon. 1969: 3). Traditions in Australian historiography up until the 1970s had stressed the centrality of pastoralism and mining in not only successfully establishing Australia as a nation, but also in forging a national character. Contemporary (1960–1970s) histories and historical geographies focused on industrialisation and economic structures as a framework for analysis of the Australian historical landscape (see for instance Blainey 1963, 1966; Butlin 1964; Jeans 1972; Perry 1963; Linge 1979).

Influenced by the British practice of industrial archaeology and its methods (Anon. 1989: 10), the Industrial Archaeology Committee was not dominated by archaeologists, although one or two have always been members. Its membership has been diverse including academics, engineers, architects, as well as non-professional amateurs with interests in technologies and conservation. Archaeologist Judy Birmingham was a founding member and chair of the panel between 1974 and 1984 (Anon. 1984). The committee initiated its aim of surveying and recording industrial sites and relict technology by sending out a questionnaire to local historical societies all over NSW, asking them for information about important industrial sites in their area. The aim was then to classify the sites according to the Standard Industrial Classification, a system devised for indus-

try by the Central Statistical Office in the UK (National Trust Annual Report 1969–70: 21). As well as surveying and recording sites, the Committee from the outset became involved in the conservation of individual sites under threat. The restoration of Segenhoe Mill at Aberdeen, NSW, was a focus for the first few years of the Committee (Annual Reports 1969–70 to 1972–73). With the support of staff later employed by the Trust, the Committee's work was eventually 'pulled together' and published as the *Industrial Archaeological Sites List* in 1980 and stage 2 in 1983, listing over 1 400 sites which the Committee believed to be of significance.

Interests in industrial heritage represented in this committee were from a broad range of perspectives, but a general or 'umbrella' conviction, which we see continually drawn out, is the crucial importance of Australia's industrial development to its success as a modern, developed nation:

The NSW Trust has been conscious for many years of the importance of industrial development in our history. In less than 200 years Australia has progressed from a convict colony to a nation of 14 million people with one of the highest living standards in the world. (Anon. 1979: 3)

The link between these narratives of industrial progress and their formative effect on Australian identity was accepted as a given:

These (industrial) sites illustrate first the convict beginnings of our colony, then a range of 19th century rural industrial sites... the foremost activity in the formation of the Australian character. Mining sites, settlements and landscapes... comprise the second formative activity, especially for Australia's economic and social structure... (Birmingham 1983: 141).

The work of the Industrial Archaeology Committee reflects the assumption that the 'essence' of the Australian historic experience was reflected in men's work in the bush. A major activity for the group was weekend trips to survey sites found abandoned or where traditional technologies were still in use. The Trust Bulletin and later Magazine published regular articles on the activities of the panel often stressing their swash-buckling adventures in the bush. This was also no doubt an interesting juxtaposition with the Trust's more genteel activities relating to their Sydney mansion houses and the notoriously elitist 'Women's Committee'. The Industrial Archaeology Committee's Australian past is the Australia of Russell Ward's 'legend' and knowing this past was a way of learning more about the Australian character (Ward 1958).

An archaeological methodology was a useful means of grappling with this sort of empirical evidence, but archaeology was not really needed to explain the value of these places—that was implicit in their Australianess, their character and often in their setting and location in a landscape. This fairly new (i.e. in the 1960s) concept of industrial archaeology, derived from Britain, saw technology as the defining characteristic of Britain's recent past and its industrial revolution. Such an emphasis on technology was a feature of much archaeology at the time, not just the archaeology of the modern or recent period. The classifications of stone, copper, bronze and iron ages, in the context of cultural evolutionism, reflect the long archaeological tradition of using technology as the most reliable, and empirically interpretable, indicator of change and development through time (Trigger 1989: 392).

## A FAMILIAR PAST

As I mentioned earlier, courses in historical archaeology were first introduced at the University of Sydney in 1974. What was it that attracted students to this type of archaeological study at this time? Kate Holmes recounts that she went to England to get experience in archaeological field work in 1974 and 1975

and found the later medieval sites she worked on there of far more interest to her than earlier periods. She thought that this was to do with the familiarity and interpretability of the structures and objects encountered. This work inspired Holmes to go back to Australia and start a masters degree in historical archaeology with Judy Birmingham, Ian Jack and Dennis Jeans at the University of Sydney:

I felt Australian history was badly taught at school and even at university, I really wanted to learn about the lives of ordinary people in the past and historical archaeology seemed to be the way to do this... Australian archaeology had far more resonance for me personally than classical archaeology. I wasn't disillusioned (with the latter); it just meant more to me personally. Also the general public were so interested and I felt that we could really explain things to people. (Holmes 2000)

Richard Morrison described the attraction of the new field of historical archaeology in the mid-1970s:

...there was nothing in the library! I was very keen on the practical skills, field experience and on the multidisciplinary nature of historical archaeology. I enjoyed photography and architectural recording and I could use these things to interpret the environment around me. I rejected the fine arts, 'booty and loot' approach of classical archaeology. I was very interested in politics and conservation, and liked what I saw as the more democratic nature of historical archaeology. (Morrison 2000)

An active engagement with one's environment seems to emerge here as an important part of the attraction to study historical archaeology. We could interpret Holmes's identification with objects from the past as feeling a link between them and her own experience of the world, which allowed her to 'understand' the past in a more coherent way. The emphasis on field work and practical skills also attracted many students, recalled Morrison, although he remembers other students explaining to him that Australian historic sites were a training ground for 'real' archaeological projects overseas (Morrison 2000).

Political engagement is another theme that emerges here. Classical archaeology was seen as totally removed from the real world and from the issues about environment, identity and the political order which were rallying points for Australian students in the 1960s and 1970s. Helen Temple recalls that, having just completed an honours thesis on gold funeral mouth bands of the Late Bronze Age, and about to enrol as a postgraduate studying Pompeian wall painting:

I woke up one morning and thought that this was not making a real impact... I wanted to contribute to the community—the Australian scene was neglected and it seemed very important to me that this was an area where I could make a real contribution. (Temple 2001)

Temple stressed the very strong feeling that the community was taking action in a new way in the 1970s. Ideas about the value of cultural heritage had been growing for some time but the sense of action and achievement was a heady mixture that created enthusiasm amongst the first team at the NSW Heritage Branch in 1977. Temple, as a young graduate, was the first historical archaeologist employed to advise the Heritage Council after the creation of the Heritage Act in 1977. She recalls:

...we were all a bit bolshie! No one was afraid to be confrontational at that time, and this included senior management and the Minister. In 1979 the Minister Paul Landa stood in a muddy trench, in his Gucci shoes, in front of a bulldozer, declaring the rights of archaeologists to investigate the site of Sydney's first gaol... We weren't concerned about disciplinary boundaries, we all worked together. Historical archaeology was perhaps viewed more broadly then and generally cultural her-

itage was seen as a multidisciplinary issue. My experience today is that the view of historical archaeology has really narrowed to issues of excavation. (Temple 2001)

The breadth of issues encountered, and the multidisciplinary of the approaches developed to deal with them, emerges as another important theme in the attraction to historical archaeology. In many ways we can interpret this as an experience of camaraderie between individuals, all working in the context of a dynamic heritage movement. In other ways however, as Temple suggests, the history of heritage management in Australia suggests that notions of historical archaeological value, and the role of the historical archaeologist, have been significantly curtailed as disciplinary boundaries have become more regulated, refined and entrenched in heritage management.

## CONCLUSIONS: STRUCTURES OF VALUE

Making and lauding difference is the very essence of heritage, an enterprise half historical, half divine. (Lowenthal 1996: 181)

The rise and rise of the heritage movement in the late-twentieth century has established powerful western discourses of value and authenticity in transnational, if not global, networks. As several critics have suggested, this movement should not be seen as a radical departure in terms of *interest* in the past, as it embodies the historical consciousness(es) of modernity, but it can be seen as involving new forms of practice and governance, and a new site for the hegemonic deployment of forms of expert knowledge (Smith 2000). I have argued here that long traditions of environmental concern included Aboriginal sites and relics as an aspect of a treasured landscape, and that the NSW National Trust's role in the conservation of Indigenous sites reflected this tradition. However the 1960s and 1970s in Australia saw the coalition of a number of discourses which linked cultural identity to a material inheritance of things and places. One of these discourses was archaeology. Historical archaeology derives its concepts of value and significance from a process which historicised the settler nation, valued the material remnants of the settler past and linked them to a historically continuous identity.

The environmental conservation movement which emerged in Australia in the 1960s has been described as 'a fusion of romanticism, nationalism and science, but...also an attempt to reject colonialism' (Morton & Smith 1999: 172). Davison plays down the central importance of nationalism as a cause for the heritage movement, arguing that Australians were following wider trends and that the National Estate might be just as well seen as a creation of UNESCO as a symptom of nationalism (Davison 2000: 119). It is clear that Australia was involved in these transnational preservation and environmental discourses, but assigning a single, pre-eminent cause for Australia's heritage movement imposes that linear, progressive framework which is an inappropriate framework for historical explanation. I am not suggesting here that nationalism was the pre-eminent cause of the emergence of historical archaeology and the heritage movement, a single cause is not realistic in what I have shown to be a discursively complex cultural landscape.

An anomaly in the way in which discourses of nation, identity and heritage have been linked in Australia since the 1960s, is their limited incorporation of concepts of settler cultural tradition. A distinct focus of many nationalist and culturalist movements around the globe has been an interest in 'folklife' (Appadurai 1996: 15; Handler 1988; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). However in Australia, concepts of settler folklife, culture and tradition have not been developed in tandem with the conservation of things and places. Although significant attention has been paid in the last decade to what has been termed 'intangible heritage' and 'social significance', heritage management retains a robust system whereby heritage values are



managed through land management and the conservation of sites and objects. While there have been some folklife movements in Australia these have focused on song and story-telling and their overlap with main stream heritage movements has been minimal (pers. comm. L. Young). In 1986 the Federal Government initiated a Committee of Inquiry into Folklife in Australia which found that heritage protection in Australia had so focused on material heritage that all concepts of folklife or cultural tradition had been completely neglected (Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Folklife in Australia 1987).

Concerns about the inclusiveness of heritage arose early in the history of the movement, starting with Aboriginal rights to cultural heritage and moving into concerns for the heritage of non-Anglo communities. It was recognised that cultural difference needed to be understood to some extent to enable the heritage of diverse communities to be identified and managed. But why was the Anglo-settler heritage so self-evident that its cultural construction was not even questioned? The answer lies in the dominance of the category of 'national' as a framework for concepts of history and identity during this period, and in their constitutive role in the development of heritage management. The historical narratives which dominated popular understandings of Australia's nineteenth-century colonial and twentieth-century national pasts were overwhelmingly the narratives of national development. The history and identity of the white settlers was the national identity and the history of the nation, the equivalence was taken for granted. Within this context methodologies were not required to understand the cultural construction of value, the value was simply *historical* and *national*. This seems to be one of the reasons why concepts of folklife and tradition have not been developed alongside material heritage management, as they have been to some extent in the United States (see for instance Glassie 1977; Hufford 1994). The other major thread in explaining the relative absence of notions of folklife in Australian settler heritage discourse is the locating of national identity in the landscape (Ireland forthcoming). Landscape and place are in fact constructed as the holders of tradition in Australian heritage discourse; the role of tradition in community life has been under-conceptualised.

The role of nationalism as a foundational discourse for Australian heritage has been down-played because of a concentration on only overtly nationalistic behaviour or cultural expression, with its associated negative connotations. Donald Horne claimed that the period of the 'new nationalism' was far more about identity than about what people at the time would have articulated as nationalism (Horne 1981). It was experienced as a 'cultural awakening' which he thought in many ways did not deserve the tainted term 'nationalism' which then, as now, was associated more with flag waving, racism and warfare. Horne construes nationalism only as a negative form of cultural chauvinism, and hesitates to link this term with the heady, radical and culturally rich movement of which he was a part. However Ghassan Hage's study of multiculturalism in Australia has shown that the national context remains fundamental to identity construction and cultural practice in Australia (Hage 1998). He suggests that in Australia 'ethnicity' and 'culture' are ascribed only to minorities in multicultural discourse while the white, mainstream cultural identity is completely nationalised, and one effect of this is masking any understanding of cultural difference within white, Anglo-Australia. He develops terms such as *practical nationalism* and *national belonging* to describe everyday modes of behaviour and cultural practice which are not generally understood as overtly nationalistic, but are subtly embedded in social relations. In a similar vein I have used the concept of the *habitus*, Bourdieu's term for an 'embodied history', as a useful one to describe the way images of the nation operate within culture and in social relations in common and everyday ways (Ireland 2000; 2001).

An understanding of nationalism as an identity project, and

an understanding of the practice of archaeology and the status of questions posed about the past, requires critical scrutiny of the 'knowledges' which are compounded into ordinary, everyday questions about how we know who we are. The activities I discuss in this paper show how a complex amalgam of personalities, connections, beliefs and influences were brought to bear in the articulation of a new form of value for the material relics of the Australian historic past. A crucial part of this process was their incorporation within a concept of the nation and *valuing* this concept as a source of history and of identity.

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