

## Editorial

Welcome to Volume 28 of *Australasian Historical Archaeology*. It is an honour to write my first editorial, following the 'retirement' of Mary Casey, who does however remain a member of the ASHA team as General Editor. Mary was appointed journal editor in 2003 and during her term, along with her guest editors, she successfully consolidated AHA as a high quality 'A' rated journal. During this time AHA presented festschrifts for two key figures in Australasian historical archaeology, Judy Birmingham and Graham Connah, both also past editors of this journal. Two further special editions were published: the first on the archaeology of the overseas Chinese and the second an influential collection on new approaches to artefacts. General volumes during this period featured excavation and survey reports, recent research by honours and higher degree students, as well as a growing number of papers derived from secondary and comparative research. I am sure all ASHA members will join me in thanking Mary for her unstinting service and wish her well in her future endeavours. I look forward to working with her in her new role.

2010 saw several changes for the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology. A new ASHA president in Jon Prangnell saw the executive team move to Jon's base at the University of Queensland, where he is supported by an enthusiastic group of ASHA volunteers. I am very grateful to Jon, Kate Quirk and Geraldine Mate for their advice and support, and especially to Linda Terry, who has taken on the much needed role of editorial assistant. Another major issue was the release of the Australian Research Council's journal rankings under the new regime known as ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia Initiative). Unfortunately AHA lost its coveted 'A' status and was demoted to a 'B', along with many other journals publishing research in our multidisciplinary area – such as the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, the *Journal of Social Archaeology* and the *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, to name just a few. This was particularly disappointing considering the significant work of the journal's previous editors over the past years to improve the standards, editorial procedures and reputation of AHA. The new ERA system means that we need all ASHA members to be advocates for the journal – in terms of formal consultation when submissions are invited, acting as referees for papers in your own specialist areas and of course in submitting your own high quality research papers for publication! Another change which is particularly timely in view of the ERA rankings, is the establishment of a new and expanded Editorial Board. You will see the exciting list of new Board members at the end of the journal. I am grateful for the commitment to AHA shown by the eminent academics and professionals making up the new board and also extend thanks to members of the past Board for their service over many years. The new Board takes on a distinctly more international flavour and I eagerly anticipate discussion on future directions for the journal based on their advice and mentorship.

In terms of future directions for the journal my aims as editor include the following:

- Compilation of an expanded range of journal 'metrics', including citation statistics, in order to demonstrate the significance and impact of research published in AHA;
- To continue to publish quality research derived from the broad range of professionals practicing historical archaeology, including academics, private and public sector archaeologists, museum and heritage professionals and higher degree students;

- To continue to explore the intersections between historical archaeology, heritage, cultural memory and social identity by publishing research which is reflective about present research interests and social contexts; and
- To expand the international contribution of the journal through publications which present findings of significance to the global themes of historical archaeology.

Lofty aims perhaps – but aims which are I believe are a requirement for the survival of AHA in today's competitive research environment. Historical archaeology has tended to be overwhelmingly focused on national frameworks and while this is true for most forms of archaeology it is important that AHA as a journal contributes to broader dialogues and presents local case studies of international significance.

The papers in Volume 28 are diverse, but some linking themes are evident in their subjects, context and approaches. This collection once again represents a pleasing mixture of voices derived from academics, consultants and research students. This reflects the context for practice of historical archaeology in Australia and New Zealand – a context which is increasingly understood as producing a distinctive vitality for historical archaeology as an archaeology of and for the modern world.

Burke's paper in this volume, a study of Peel town in Western Australia, is a significant addition to research on private, syndicate-based colonisation. It highlights contrasts with other, better known Australian examples of 'first' settlements based on military and penal structures, reminding us of the dual role of this form of colonial immigration in the aspirational migration of the working classes, as well as a form of speculative investment by wealthier groups – a combination that often resulted in various degrees of human misery. The human experience of migration is also a theme for Clarke, Frederick and Williams' paper entitled 'Wish you were here'. Focusing on the concept of rock engravings at the North Head Quarantine Station in Sydney as 'postcards from the past', this paper reflects on the past and present meanings of these inscriptions, suggesting linguistic and visual tropes that reveal aspects of the shared experience of travel and migration in the 19th century.

Papers by Davies, Kelloway and Birmingham, Higginbotham and Blake all represent significant secondary studies of artefact material. These papers contribute to the development of useful methodological approaches to key questions of assemblage analysis, diet, ceramic provenance and manufacture and women's work in 19th century institutions, and also provide data for the comparative studies that have long been discussed as crucial to the development of historical archaeology as a producer of substantive new anthropological, historical and archaeological knowledge. It is interesting that these papers demonstrate the stimulus provided by the AHA volume 'Approaching Artefacts in Australasian Historical Archaeology' edited by Martin Gibbs in 2005, as well as other recent work published in the journal. It is clear that innovative artefact and material culture studies are important vehicles through which historical archaeology done in Australia and New Zealand can contribute to broader debates in the archaeology of the modern world.

Schacht's paper, based on her PhD research, reports on findings about the 'shape' and content of historical archaeological research in Australia, in order to highlight directions towards overarching research frameworks, a subject of long discussion amongst archaeological heritage managers. Schacht's paper highlights, amongst many other things, the

importance of key discipline journals, such as AHA, in shaping future research questions, as researchers respond to the body of published material that such sources represent. This paper also highlights how significant recent efforts to establish digital archives of unpublished material, such as the University of Sydney's NSW Archaeology On-Line (<http://nswaol.library.usyd.edu.au>), will be for the development of future research, by broadening the body of materials and interpretations available, especially to students and higher degree researchers, but also of course to researchers based anywhere in the Australasian region or indeed in the world.

Finally, two short research commentaries by Bell and Quirk are included in the Research Notes section. The themes discussed in this dialogue dovetail nicely with the themes of Higginbotham's paper, which also discusses the role of archaeological evidence in characterising the experience of life in gold field towns. Bell, in commenting on Quirk's paper in Volume 26 of AHA, makes a plea for earlier research in Australian historical archaeology not to be overlooked as researchers seek to explore the human experience of the Australian gold rush. While Quirk revisits the prominent role of historical archaeology in breaking down stereotypes, historical mythologies and received understandings of the past

that tend to shape broader public discourses of historical identity.

Happily, Kate Quirk continues in her role as book reviews editor and has assembled a series of reviews which demonstrate the vitality of current publishing in the field. From toothbrushes to human remains, postcolonial critiques and missions in Australia and New Zealand, it is clear to see dominant themes emerging from recent work – as researchers use careful material culture analyses and deep understanding of the social context of their work, to develop new approaches to and new questions about archaeologies of colonialism and cultural exchange.

I would like to extend special thanks to Tim Murray, Martin Gibbs, Mary Casey, Jane Lydon and Jen Webb for their advice and wisdom on all that is and could be involved in the editorial role! A very special thanks also to Penny Crook, Jane Lydon and Iain Stuart for helpful and timely assistance in editorial matters, and to all the authors and anonymous reviewers, thank you for your thoughtful, generous and careful work, without which the journal would not be possible.

*TRACY IRELAND*