

Newsletter

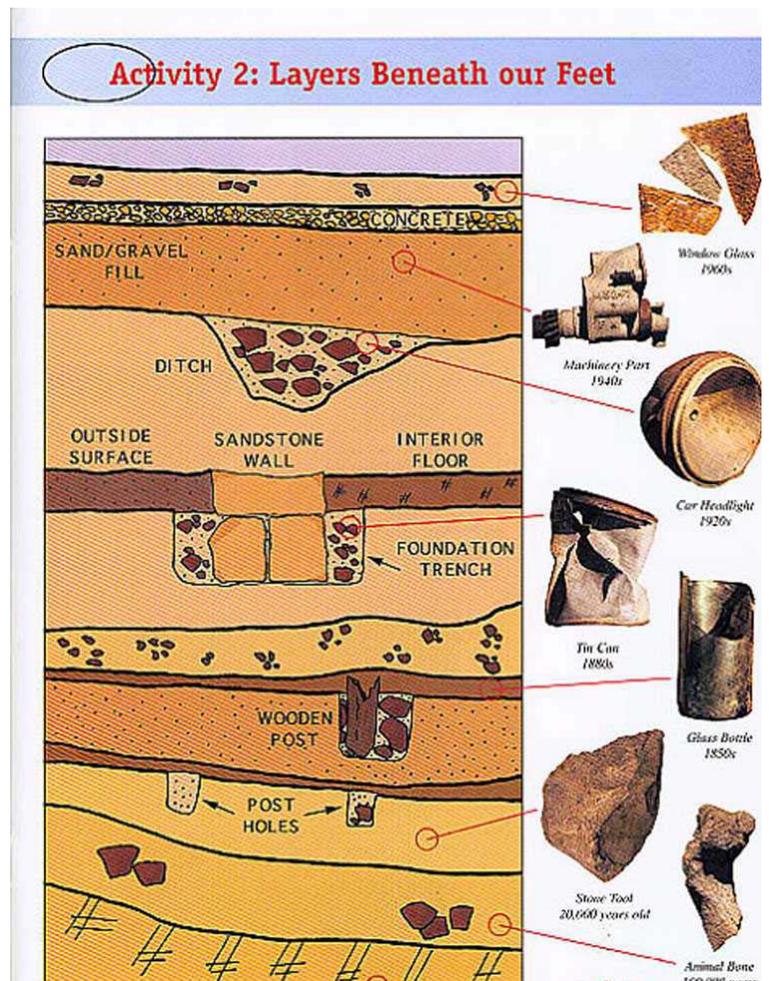
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Activity 2: Layers Beneath our Feet



Inside...

- Webmaster's Report ... 1
- Membership Secretary's Report ... 4
- Victorian State Chapter Report ... 6
- Ancient Nut-crackers ... 7
- Goodbye *Homo ergaster* ... 7
- A Poor State of Conservation ... 8
- Developing Standards for Historical Archaeological Work in NSW ... 12
- National Archaeology Week: History in Ruins ... 14
- New Commonwealth Heritage Regime ... 15
- AACAI at WAC-5 ... 18
- Book Reviews ... 19
- News From Godden Mackay Logan ... 21
- Conference Notices ... 21
- Seminar Programs ... 23

AACAI Contacts 2003

President:

Peter Veth
(02) 6246 1196
Fax: (02) 6261 4285
president@aacai.com.au

Vice President:

Jo McDonald
(02) 6295 3355
Fax: (02) 6295 3366
vicepresident@aacai.com.au

Secretary:

Richard Fullagar
(02) 4267 4547
Fax: (02) 4267 4547
secretary@aacai.com.au

Treasurer:

Louis Warren
(08) 9173 2903
Fax: (08) 9173 2903
treasurer@aacai.com.au

Membership

Secretary/Webmaster: Sean Ulm
(07) 3365 2385
Fax: (07) 3365 2359
membershipsecretary@aacai.com.au
webmaster@aacai.com.au

Newsletter Editor:

Jane Harrington
(02) 9560 0275
Fax: (02) 9560 0279
newsletter@aacai.com.au

NSW Delegate:

Anne Bickford
(02) 9569 9672
Fax: (02) 9550 0261
abickford@mpx.com.au

Qld Delegate

Sean Ulm
(07) 3365 2385
Fax: (07) 3365 2359
s.ulm@uq.edu.au

SA Delegate:

Gordon Copland
(08) 8201 3676
Fax: (08) 8201 3845
gordon.copland@flinders.edu.au

Vic Delegate

Oona Nicholson
(03) 9646 9499
Fax: (03) 9646 9242
onicolson@biosisresearch.com.au

WA Delegate:

Steve Corsini
(08) 9293 7071
Fax: (08) 9293 7072
sjcarc@upnaway.com.au

Public Officer:

Kelvin Officer
(02) 6282 9415
Fax: (02) 6282 9416
publicofficer@aacai.com.au

<http://www.aacai.com.au>

help@aacai.com.au

Box 214 Holme Building University of Sydney NSW 2006

Front Cover: Example page from *Digging for Gold!*, a primary school education kit, based on archaeological investigation of the Camp Street (Government Camp) archaeological site in Ballarat. (See Mackay paper p. 14)

AACAI AGM announcement

The 2003 AACAI AGM will be held during the forthcoming AAA conference at Jindabyne, near Canberra. Please put in your diary that the AGM will be on Thursday 4th December, from 8 pm onwards at a room venue to be finalised by AAA conference organisers.

The existing NEC has served two full terms and no office bearer may be elected to the same office on the National Executive Committee for more than two consecutive terms. Nominations are sought for all positions. **Please consider offering your services.**

Nomination forms and further information will be distributed to all members.

developers, Indigenous communities and students. With this diverse target group in mind, the web pages were designed to convey basic information about AACAI in a straightforward manner. Also, to encourage people to make return visits to the site, we have continued to expand and update resource material on the site including current and recent back issues of the *AACAI Newsletter*. Significantly, the website hosts the bulk of the information traditionally published by AACAI in hard copy form, including the Register of Members, Application Package, *AACAI Newsletter*, Code of Ethics and Constitution. We anticipate that increasing use of web resources in the future will reduce the need for at least some hard copy resources and thus reduce the overall recurrent costs to AACAI.

Webmaster's Report

Introduction

This report documents the first 164 days of operation of the new AACAI website from its public launch on 17 January 2003, after a period of testing and refinement, to the end of the 2002–2003 financial year on 30 June 2003. The AACAI website is located at the following url:

<http://www.aacai.com.au>

Background

On 17 January 2003 the new AACAI website at www.aacai.com.au was launched. Up until this time the website was hosted and maintained by the Archaeological Computing Laboratory, University of Sydney. The new site is hosted by a commercial internet service provider based at the University of Queensland (UQConnect). Responsibility for site maintenance rests with the newly created position of 'Webmaster' co-opted by the National Executive Committee.

Target Audience

The AACAI website is designed to provide information to a diverse client base. Users include AACAI members, other archaeologists (potential members), government departments,

Costs

The www.aacai.com.au domain name was registered for a two year period (18 December 2002 to 19 December 2003) for a cost of \$140.01. The hosting costs per annum (9 January 2003 to 9 January 2003) are \$548. The hosting products selected allow scope for significant site development.

Maintenance and Updates

Weekly (and sometimes daily) updates and corrections have been made to the site since its launch. Changes have focused on corrections and updates to member entries in the Register of Consultants. Other recent changes include the addition of an 'Awards' section to profile winners of the Laila Haglund Prize for Excellence in Consultancy.

Usage Statistics

Up until the end of the 2002–2003 financial year the website received 58,024 hits (Figure 1) from users based in 38 countries (Figure 2). Daily usage averages c.350 hits per day and monthly usage in excess of 10,500 hits. Usage over this period comprises the accessing of 42,505 files, 10,190 pages and 3321 individual visits. The Register of Consultants and its subordinate pages (Full Members, Associate Members and Affiliate Members) received the majority of hits

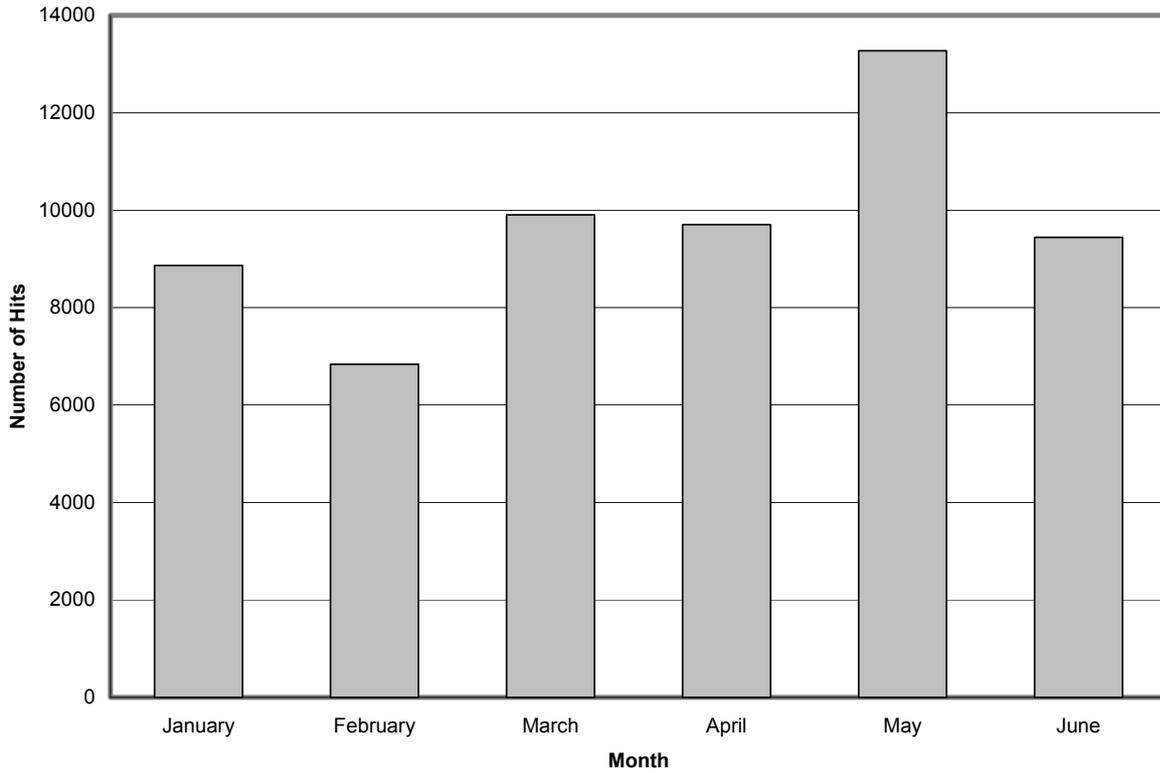


Figure 1. AACAI web site usage statistics, 17 January – 30 June 2003.

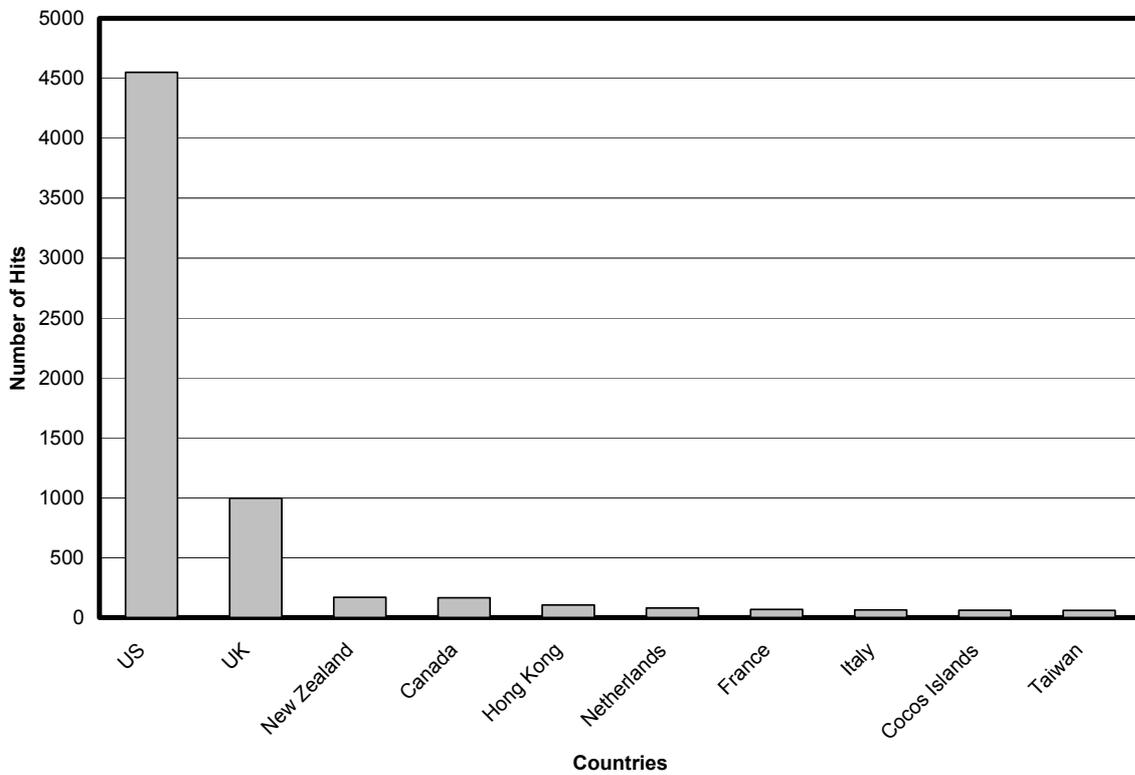


Figure 2. Top-10 countries by web page hits (after Australia), 17 January – 30 June 2003.

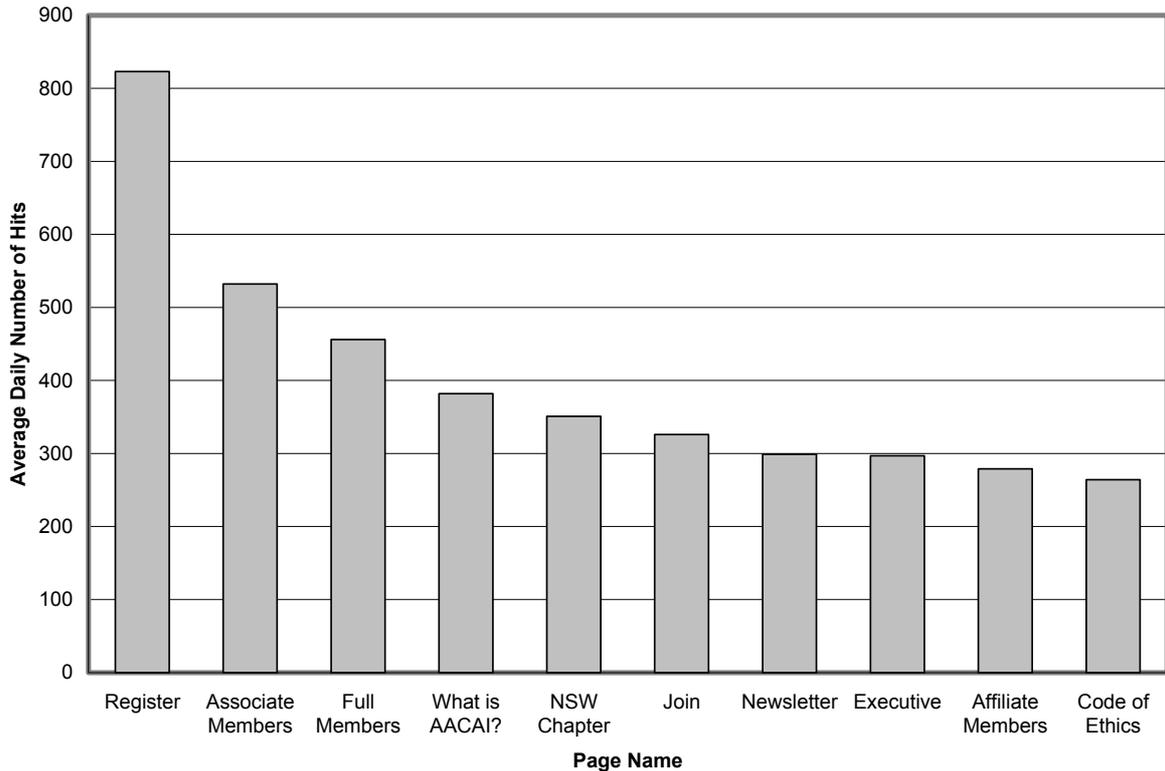


Figure 3. Top-10 pages by web page hits (after home page), 17 January – 30 June 2003.

Usage Statistics (cont. from page 1)

(Figure 3). Pages with joining information and general information about AACAI were also popular, with 243 copies of the full application package in .pdf format downloaded. Around 30% of hits were from users based outside Australia. The vast majority of international visitors to the site are based in the English-speaking world, comprising the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada (Figure 2).

Email Discussion List

As a component of the website redevelopment a dedicated email discussion list was established for AACAI financial members. This list was established to provide a direct means for AACAI members to communicate with each other and for the National Executive Committee to contact the membership on important issues. It is a closed list – only financial members can post to, and receive messages from, the list. This list is not intended to be a substitute for more general Australian archaeology email discussion lists such as AUSARCH-L. Please limit postings to this list to matters immediately relevant to the AACAI membership. We encourage AACAI members to subscribe to AUSARCH-L for more general matters.

If you wish to send an email to the discussion

list address it to: aacai@lists.uq.edu.au. Note that when you send an email to this address it will be sent to every person on the 'aacai' discussion list. If you have any problems with the list please email webmaster@aacai.com.au.

Future Development

- addition of a links page for web resources relevant to members and consulting archaeology
- uploading selected back issues of the *AACAI Newsletter* in .pdf format
- further development of Full Member entry templates
- conversion of Full Member entries to unique member folders (e.g. www.aacai.com.au/veth)
- addition of metadata tags to Full Member entries to allow easier web search engine detection

Feedback and contributions are very welcome. Please email webmaster@aacai.com.au

Sean Ulm

Webmaster, August 2003

Membership Secretary's Report

Overview of Membership (2002–2003 Financial Year)

Financial membership of AACAI as at 30 June 2003 for the 2002–2003 financial year was 105 (20 Full Members; 66 Associate Members; 19 Affiliate Members). In addition, 53 people/institutions had an *AACAI Newsletter*-only subscription, including 44 complimentary copies distributed to libraries, university teaching departments, government agencies and cognate associations (Table 1, Figures 1–2). The Register of Members for the 2002–2003 financial year was published in the April *AACAI Newsletter* (No. 92). We will continue to publish this list in the newsletter on an annual basis.

	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	NT	O/S	Total
Full	4	7	4	2	0	3	0	0	0	20
Associate	5	25	6	4	0	12	14	0	0	66
Affiliate	3	9	1	0	1	2	2	0	1	19
TOTAL	12	41	11	6	1	17	16	0	1	105
Newsletter	5	17	9	7	3	5	3	3	1	53

Table 1. Financial members for the 2002–2003 financial year.

AACAI Members 1998-2003

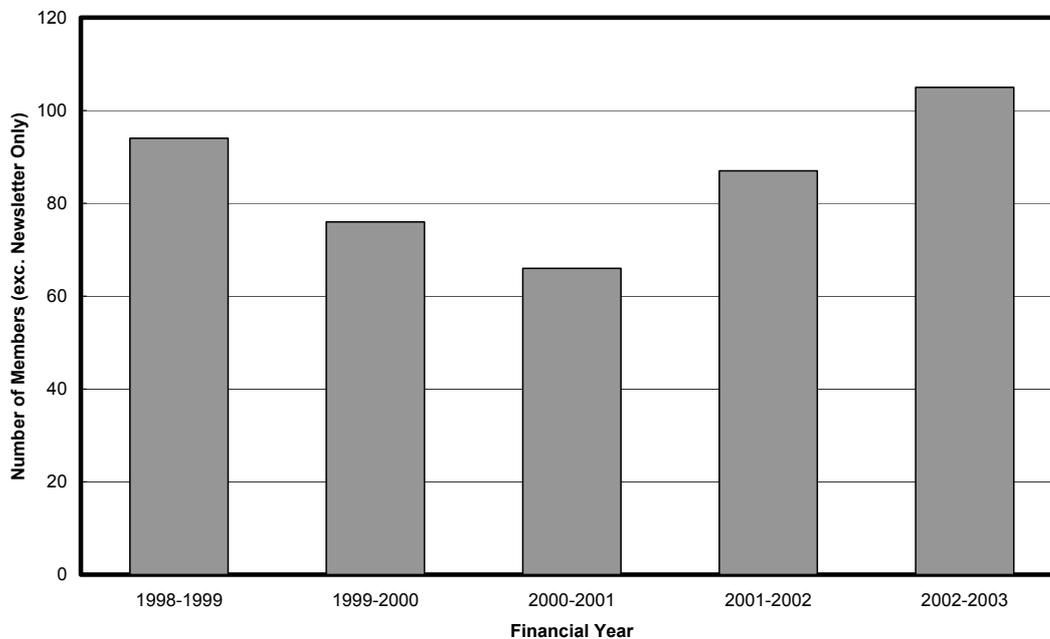


Figure 1. AACAI Membership (all categories, excluding *AACAI Newsletter*-only) 1998–2003.

AACAI Members 1998-2003

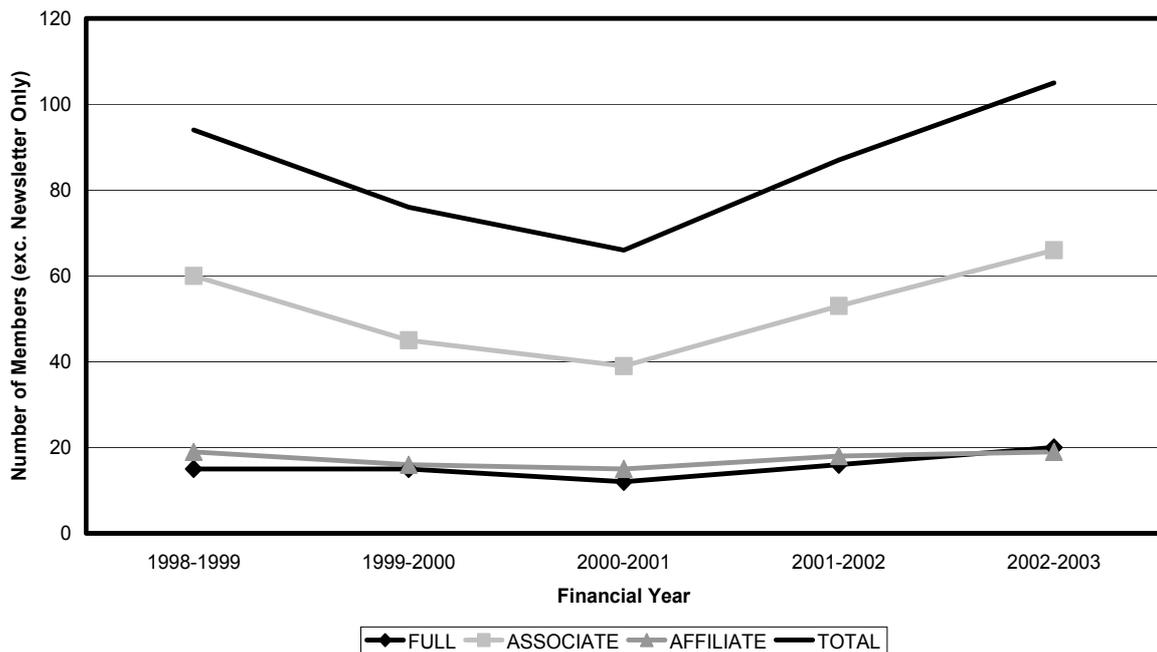


Figure 2. AACAI Membership by category, 1998–2003.

2002–2003 Renewal Reminder Schedule and Membership Drive

On 3 September 2002, 123 subscription renewal reminders were posted to members with outstanding fees for the 2002–2003 financial year. This renewal reminder was posted to anyone who had been a financial member in the last four years. On 25 October 2002, second reminders were posted to members with outstanding fees. On 22 December 2002, a third renewal reminder was posted to members with outstanding fees.

As part of a general membership drive, letters of invitation to join AACAI were sent to all applied archaeology/cultural heritage entries in the Australian Yellow Pages where the personnel associated with the company/business could not immediately be identified as existing AACAI members. Associate and Affiliate members were also invited to consider upgrading their membership to Full status. The AACAI general information flyer was included as an insert in the December volume of *Australian Archaeology* (No. 55).

2003–2004 Membership and Renewals

As at 25 July 2003 there were only 12 financial

members (8 Full Members; 8 Associate Members; 1 Affiliate Member). Subscription renewal forms for the 2003–2004 financial year were posted on 25 July 2003.

Successful Membership Applications 2002–2003 Financial Year

Seven new members were admitted to AACAI during the 2002–2003 financial year (1 Full Member; 5 Associate Members; 1 Affiliate Member):

- Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy – Full Member
- Kylli Firth – Associate Member
- Fiona Leslie – Associate Member
- Karen McFadden – Associate Member
- David Mott – Associate Member
- Jill Reid – Associate Member
- Helen Cooke – Affiliate Member

Membership Applications in Progress

Three Full Membership applications are currently in progress. Two of these are upgrades from Associate Membership status. One Affiliate Membership application is in progress.

Several membership applications received over the last 18 months remain incomplete. Repeated correspondence has been entered into in an attempt to complete these applications.

Other Issues

The Membership Committee has raised concerns about the structure of the current application process, particularly the issue of identifying and assessing core skills and special skills for Full Membership applications. A *Draft Discussion Paper: Full Membership Skills Category Review* has been circulated as a basis for discussion on this issue.

The publication of the Register of Members on the AACAI website has enabled members to review membership details at anytime and email corrections to the Membership Secretary. Many members have updated entries since the website launch, helping to make the Register of Members as up-to-date as possible.

Since the website was launched on 17 January 2003, 243 copies of the Full Application Package have been downloaded in .pdf format.

Sean Ulm

Membership Secretary, August 2003

Victorian State Chapter of AACAI

Report of Activities 2002–2003

The Victorian chapter is still in its early days and is concentrating on a membership drive with the consultants in the State.

We held an informal meeting at The Standard Hotel in Fitzroy on 19 February 2003 to generate discussion among people and promote the Association. Twelve people turned up and we created a short list of priority actions to follow up on. In the main the actions on the list were to engage in discussions with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and Heritage Victoria (HV) in regard to the consultants expectations of these organisations and clarify and refine some of the directives we are given (or not given). The attendees were also keen to see some informal discussions about various techniques and methodologies used by consultants to be shared at future meetings. People would also like to have some presentations similar to those held in NSW in the future.

I have spoken to both AAV and HV and they both responded that they would be very happy to deal with AACAI and would prefer to issue information via AACAI to the consultants.

AAV have also approached me regarding using the AACAI list of members as their referral list of consultants when asked to supply one. They do not like to supply (or be seen as endorsing) their current list of consultants as it is literally a list of

anyone who contacts them to say they are an archaeological consultant available for work.

We are holding another meeting on Thursday 8 May 2003 at Macs Hotel in Melbourne at 6.30pm. I have had RSVPs from eighteen people so far. I am not charging members or non-members for attendance at this meeting, but will be doing so in future when the membership increases. I view these initial meetings as a forum for increasing interest in and promoting the value of being a member of the association.

We have two guest speakers from AAV attending our May meeting who will be discussing their recently released Advisory Notes. They are keen to hear feedback from the consultants on these notes and on other issues that concern them.

A number of consultants have also expressed interest in discussing various sub-surface testing and monitoring techniques they have been using on projects and are keen for the attendees to discuss their experiences in this informal setting.

Macs Hotel also has a suitable function room where talks using slides or power point could be held and they will not charge AACAI for the use of it. I am keen that we take advantage of this and hopefully can arrange some talks for later in the year.

Oona Nicolson

Chairperson, May 2003

Ancient Nut-crackers

by Richard Fullagar

Pitted stones, discovered in 780,000-year-old deposits in Israel, were used to crack nuts, according to a team led by Naama Goren-Inbar from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Found on the banks of the Jordan River, at a site known as Geshen Benot Ya'aqov, the basalt stones were once thought to have been used as anvils or hammers for splitting rocks into sharp-edged cutting tools, but plants preserved at the site suggest otherwise. In the same levels as the pitted stones, the researchers found the remains of seven species of nuts – two pistachios, two oaks, Wild Almond, and the extinct Prickly Water Lily and Water Chestnut – mostly hard-shelled nuts that must be cracked open to get to the edible kernels.

Goren-Inbar and colleagues compared the results of stone-knapping experiments with wear patterns found on the ancient Israeli tools. Experimentally produced pits resembled the shallow, rough pits on the artefacts, but deeper, smoother pits on the ancient tools suggest an additional activity, which the researchers suspect was nut-cracking. They also suspect, based on observations of present-day hunter-gatherer societies, that our nut-cracking ancestors were mainly women with a good understanding of plants.

Chemical traces, starch granules and other organic residues could not be detected on the artefacts, buried so long in the waterlogged sediments. But further nut-cracking experiments may provide more clues for interpreting wear patterns.

I have worked with Australian Aborigines who use stones to crack open edible nuts and fruits, and I would reckon that there are few modern humans who have not used rocks for similar purposes. Even Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) do it! Julio Mercader (George Washington University) and colleagues recently excavated a Chimpanzee 'archaeological site' on the Ivory Coast of Africa, where Chimps have developed a nut-cracking tradition spanning several generations. They collected and studied 40 kilograms of nutshells and 4 kilograms of stone 'artefacts', arguing that the Chimps engage in 'cultural' activities that can mimic early human sites in Africa. Like us, Chimpanzee nut-crackers plan carefully to get the right kind of hammers and anvils, they accumulate refuse middens of stone chips and nutshells, and females gather most of the nuts.

Clearly, nut-cracking tools are not just artefacts of modern humans. Our extinct hominid ancestors, and closest living relatives, used them too.

Goren-Inbar, N., Sharon, G., Melamed, Y. & Kislev, M., 2002. Nuts, nut cracking, and pitted stones at Geshen Benot Ya'aqov, Israel. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci.* 99(4): 2455–2460.

Mercader, J., Panger, M. & Boesch, C., 2002. Excavation of a chimpanzee stone tool site in the African rainforest. *Science* 296: 1452–1455.



Goodbye *Homo ergaster*?

by Richard Fullagar

Debate has raged over whether *Homo erectus* is one species on the direct human line, or should be split in two: *H. erectus* in Asia, and *H. ergaster* in Africa and perhaps Europe (see 'New First out of Africa', *Nature Aust.* Winter 2001). Scientists have argued that Asian *H.*

erectus went extinct, and that only *H. ergaster* gave rise to modern humans (*H. sapiens*). However, recently discovered fossils from Africa have been assigned to *H. erectus*, indicating that there was no deep split between African and Asian representatives and that *H. erectus* was indeed our immediate ancestor.

The fossil bones – a skullcap and three thighbones – come from the one-million-year-old 'Daka' Member sediments in Ethiopia's Awash Valley. Berhane Asfaw (Rift Valley Research Service) and colleagues examined the thighbones and noted their similarity to those of *Homo erectus* in Asia. They then

compared the skullcap with other skulls from Africa and Asia, and found a considerable overlap in features. Based on this anatomical intermediacy, the researchers argue for a single, varied and widespread *H. erectus* species from about 1.78 to 0.5 million years ago.

Assigning a different name to the older specimens in Africa and Europe is, according to the researchers, misleading. Just as modern humans are a widespread and varied bunch, so too were *Homo erectus* individuals. Still, some prominent scientists disagree and simply refuse

to say goodbye to *Homo ergaster*.

Asfaw, B., Gilbert, W.H., Beyene, Y., Hart, W.K., Renne, P.R., WoldeGabriel, G., Vrba, E.S. & White, T.D., 2002. Remains of *Homo erectus* from Bouri, Middle Awash, Ethiopia. *Nature* 416: 317–320.

Reproduced with permission from *Nature Australia* Autumn 2003, vol. 27, no. 8, p. 20.

Subscriptions to Nature Australia are available through the Australian Museum or call 1800 028 558.

A Poor State of Conservation

by Kelvin Officer¹

A critique of NSW NPWS cultural heritage management, and in particular the Service's prevention of all archaeological subsurface investigation prior to the construction of the Shannon Creek Dam, South of Grafton, NSW.

The archaeologist has a limited number of tools to identify and assess the potential archaeological resource. These include the interpretation of surface features identified from surface survey, historical and oral accounts, and a variety of subsurface testing excavation techniques. Of these, subsurface testing must be considered the most useful in determining the nature and significance of an archaeological deposit. There is now a substantial body of consulting experience which demonstrates that exposures of artefacts on the ground surface do not provide an accurate indication of associated subsurface deposits. Similarly, the absence of surface artefacts is a poor reference when compared to an assessment of geomorphological and palaeoenvironmental context.

Given the primary role of excavation in archaeology, it would normally be assumed that

the keystone role of subsurface testing in archaeological assessment was an accepted and required prerequisite by statutory authorities. This, however, is not the case in New South Wales where the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is the statutory authority responsible for the management of Aboriginal sites. Despite policy acknowledgment of the importance of archaeological testing, the application of NPWS policy varies widely across the different administrative districts of the Service, known as Directorates.

This review focuses on one example of NPWS's management of development-related cultural heritage impacts in its Northern Directorate. The development referred to is a coordinated water supply project for the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour regions and includes the construction of a 30,000 megalitre water storage dam and a network of supply pipelines.

Despite some examples of high quality and best practice, by some staff and Directorate teams, NPWS, as a whole, is tarnished by its inability to maintain or enforce consistent assessment standards or methodologies. Extreme differences in policy application means that the same Aboriginal site would be managed and

assessed very differently, depending on which regional jurisdiction it falls within.

Standard NPWS policy requires that any application to impact a known or suspected archaeological deposit will only be considered following an appropriate level of archaeological assessment – which usually requires subsurface testing. However, in the Northern Directorate, the NPWS recently refused to allow any archaeological testing of known sites and potential archaeological deposits prior to the construction of a major 70 km underground water pipeline between the Karangi Reservoir and an existing Grafton supply line. The NPWS provided a Section 87 permit for the re-location of surface artefacts, but deliberately and perversely ignored below-ground artefact occurrences. The NPWS justified this position by stating that on-site Aboriginal representatives employed to monitor construction works could identify any artefacts exposed by the works, and report them to NPWS so that the necessary impact permits could be issued with minimal delay.

By insisting on this procedure, the NPWS bypassed its own requirements to identify and assess the significance of archaeological deposits prior to construction impact. It similarly ignored the advice of the proponent's archaeologists and the stipulation of the various Aboriginal groups involved. The net result was that NPWS sanctioned the whole or partial destruction of Aboriginal archaeological deposits that were, and remain, of undetermined and unassessed significance.

Despite the presentation of arguments to the contrary, the Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit continues to believe that monitoring of construction works is a satisfactory alternative to archaeological subsurface testing conducted prior to construction.

Following the completion of the pipeline late last year, local Aboriginal communities are now concerned that the same unassessed and unmitigated impacts to Aboriginal sites will occur as a result of the upcoming construction of the Shannon Creek reservoir, which will feed the pipeline.

On the 5 July the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported comments by the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Barra:way Wa:jad Traditional Owners Group that were critical of the NPWS and its role in promoting unmanaged impacts to Aboriginal sites affected by the water supply project (Refer inset next page).

The Northern Directorate have again stipulated

that they will not require, or even consider, any archaeological investigation or salvage of known or potential archaeological deposits within the dam and inundation areas. This is despite the fact that surface archaeological survey revealed over 40 Aboriginal sites which will be subject to impact by the development, and the subsurface nature of these sites has yet to be determined. Similarly, no assessment has been made of the potential for subsurface archaeological deposits within the infill deposits of the affected valley floor.

This NPWS position has prevented the Water Project proponent from fulfilling its civic and corporate obligations in mitigating impact to Aboriginal heritage values, or supporting salvage archaeological methodologies. It is an irony that while the early 20th-century European sites in the valley will be the subject of archaeological excavation prior to construction, the much older Aboriginal occupation record will be ignored.

Mr Hilton Naden, the manager of the Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit has justified the NPWS Northern Directorate stance as:

1. being consistent with the aims of the current review of NPWS standards and guidelines; and
2. complying with the wishes of the traditional owners.

Neither of these justifications can be sustained. The Director of the NPWS Cultural Heritage Division has stated that the current review of the guidelines for Aboriginal heritage assessments is not intended to discount the archaeological or scientific values of Aboriginal sites, nor to provide a basis for preventing their assessment.

The Aboriginal custodians for the Shannon Creek area have in fact requested the following:

- Aboriginal sites should not be disturbed unnecessarily.
- No subsurface archaeological work or salvage should occur at sites which will not be subjected to ground surface disturbance.
- For those sites that will be impacted by ground disturbance, archaeological salvage should be conducted so that artefacts can be recovered, and their archaeological information retrieved prior to construction impacts.
- Following archaeological analysis the recovered artefacts are to be re-located as close as possible to the original sites.

There are a large number of known sites and

areas with subsurface archaeological potential that will be subject to ground disturbance as a consequence of the Shannon Creek dam

is consistent with the wishes of Aboriginal custodians is clearly and demonstrably false. Despite a prolonged interchange of views via written correspondence, phone conversations

Elders distressed over loss of Aboriginal sites

Geraldine O'Brien
Heritage Writer

Just a week after the Premier hailed the discovery of ancient Aboriginal rock art in the Wollemi State Park, Aboriginal groups have protested against the destruction of dozens of Aboriginal sites near Grafton.

The sites will be destroyed in works for a new dam and pipeline, with the National Parks and Wildlife Service refusing permission for them to be excavated.

Local Aboriginal groups have accused the service of being "a law unto itself" and are angry that the work is going ahead without a full archaeological investigation.

Betty Cameron, of the Barra-Way-Wa-jad elders, said although the local people did not oppose the project, they wanted the opportunity to retrieve cultural artefacts from areas that would be disturbed by the construction works.

She said the elders and representatives of the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Lands Council had met National Parks representatives in February to discuss the scheme, which is part of the Clarence Valley/Coffs Harbour regional water supply project.

"We said if they don't need to dig up the ground, then anything that might be there should be left untouched. But if they do need to

disturb the ground, they should do a proper investigation and if anything was found, we suggested that they'd be removed and reburied close by."

But she said there had been no response from the meeting.

Originally, the service had concurred with a cultural heritage management strategy prepared by consultants Navin Officer which had recommended investigation of numerous potential archaeological deposits.

But a second strategy, prepared by the same group, was prefaced by a long disclaimer saying the revised plan was driven mainly by "the requirements of the northern directorate of the NPWS".

The service deployed Aboriginal monitors to record and salvage any material found "during and after construction work".

Greg Cromelin, of Barra-Way-Wa-jad, said the monitors could only work on some sections of the pipeline "and they didn't want us to dig anything up. The National Parks are a law unto themselves, they do what they want to do."

A spokesman for the service said that in refusing to issue permits for some work it was "seeking to avoid unnecessary destructive impacts on the cultural heritage", a policy in line with the wishes of the elders and of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee for the project.

and in-person meetings between the Aboriginal groups, the proponent's archaeological consultants and NPWS staff, all attempts to correct the NPWS misrepresentation of the Elders' views has been to no avail.

Similarly, arguments concerning the scientific merits of allowing further archaeological investigation, and compliance with NPWS policy, standard and professional best practice, have produced no change in the NPWS position. Perhaps the Northern Directorate's position is best explained by the personal views of its staff overriding any rational application of NPWS policy. This is suggested by a formal response by the NAHU Manager to a request by an agent of the project proponent for clarification of the appropriate management of potential archaeological deposits (PADs). It was stated that: 'I do not support scratching around in the dirt for POTENTIAL relics so I will not issue a licence to excavate a PAD' (emphasis as per original transmission 18/03/2002).

It is hard to comprehend the lack of understanding of the archaeological resource that is implied by this position, nor its source from a government manager of cultural heritage. It is an unfortunate fact that most of the State's water reservoirs were constructed prior to any statutory requirement to assess or mitigate their impacts on cultural and archaeological heritage. These inundated areas are now a permanent loss in our understanding of past Aboriginal occupation and lifeways. A notable exception is the excavation by Attenbrow of Loggers Shelter in 1981 prior to its inundation by the Upper Mangrove Creek

development. These include sites within the dam wall construction area and the 'borrow pit' areas where material will be quarried for dam wall construction. In addition, the removal of forest cover from the inundation area is expected to cause varying degrees of ground surface disturbance depending on the methods employed.

The continuing assertion by the NPWS that the prevention of all archaeological subsurface work

Reservoir. This deposit revealed a record of occupation back 11,000 years. If this reservoir were being constructed now, and if it were located in the Northern Directorate, then the NPWS would allow the re-location of the surface artefacts and disallow any excavation of the deposits. The heritage of 11,000 years would be ignored and lost.

Excavations of a number of rock shelter sites in the region surrounding Shannon Creek by McBryde in the mid-1970s revealed a record of occupation extending back 6500 years. The potential of open sites in the region remains largely unexplored and unknown. How can the NPWS justify the prevention of even exploratory investigation of known and potential archaeological deposits in the Shannon Creek dam and inundation area? This is an area in excess of 200 ha, some of which will be obliterated, and the remainder never again available to future investigation. Where is the NPWS' reported congruence with the provisions of the Burra Charter, the NPWS commitment to best practice, and its commitment to excellence in cultural heritage management?

Correspondence to the NPWS on these matters has involved the Manager of the Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit, and successively higher management tiers including the Director of the Cultural Heritage Division, the Director-General of the NPWS, and the State Minister for the Environment.² Despite general statements of commitment to NPWS policy and reassurances that archaeological values are not to be discounted in future policy positions, all replies from the tiers of NPWS management have failed to address any of the specific issues and have instead indicated that they should be taken up at the Directorate level. This reveals a major problem in the way the NPWS deals with external criticism of its actions. There appears to be no independent means of reviewing the actions and policy interpretation conducted at the Directorate level. Higher tiers of management are happy to justify broad policy platforms, but refer questions about on-ground policy interpretation back to the practitioners whose actions are the subject of criticism.

The inability, or perhaps lack of will by the NPWS in this case, to support two of its most fundamental statutory responsibilities – the effective management of cultural and archaeological Aboriginal heritage values – is cause for major concern to all Aboriginal custodians, stakeholder groups and heritage practitioners.

There are a number of potential explanations for the NPWS position:

- The different NPWS Directorates have full discretion to interpret and selectively enforce NPWS policy.
- There is no effective central NPWS management or authority that forces Directorates to comply with NPWS policy, consistent or standard practice.
- Despite assurances to the contrary, future NPWS practice (if not its policy), will discount the value of scientific methodology or archaeological heritage significance, and assign contemporary Aboriginal cultural value as the main and overriding determinant of significance and archaeological site management.
- The NPWS can effectively misrepresent the views of any of its clients (whether they are Aboriginal stakeholders or heritage practitioners) because their policy decisions are not subject to any independent or transparent avenue of review or appeal.

All of these scenarios pose serious questions regarding the competency of NPWS to be an effective manager of Aboriginal sites. The lack of consistency and compliance with standard practice across the NPWS Directorates invites accusations of bias and corruption. If a development proponent in one part of the State is required by NPWS policy to engage heritage consultants to investigate known or potential archaeological deposits within a proposed development area, then this should be a consistent requirement across the entire State. Where such requirements are not consistently applied, there is a major financial disparity in the cost of environmental impact assessments. In the absence of any compliance with standard practice, policy or transparent decision making, the NPWS will have to defend itself against accusations of mismanagement, corruption and personnel bias.

The uneven application by the NPWS of their assessment standards and requirements also makes it impossible for heritage practitioners to provide consistent advice to their clients regarding obligations and necessary impact mitigation measures.

The case of the Shannon Creek archaeological deposits reveals major flaws in the administration and authority of the NPWS as a statutory authority. Despite strong written policy commitments, there is no consistency in policy application, enforcement or justification. Apparently there is also no will to enforce consistent policy application at the Directorate level. Similarly, there is no independent means of reviewing or appealing Directorate decisions. When faced with external criticism from

traditional owners or archaeological consultants, the Service appears to close ranks in a defensive response rather than attempt an inclusive and transparent process of review. When a keystone methodology, such as archaeological subsurface testing is ignored by the NPWS, heritage practitioners and traditional owners must ask the question if, indeed, archaeological and scientific values are now being devalued by the Service. If NPWS can dismiss the conduct of an assessment-related program of subsurface testing by the misrepresentation of traditional owner views, it begs the question how committed is the Service to the effective management of the archaeological resource?

If the current position of the NPWS Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit on the assessment of archaeological deposits is not brought into line with NPWS practice elsewhere in the State, then it will move closer to being a vandal rather than a manager of Aboriginal cultural heritage. It will be remembered as the government authority that presided over the site-unseen destruction of the Shannon Creek Aboriginal sites – the regulator that insisted that no archaeological excavations be conducted, that none of the information about past Aboriginal occupation be recovered, and that the views of Aboriginal Elders be listened to but ignored.

There is an urgent need for archaeologists, heritage practitioners and traditional owners alike to impress upon the NPWS that the archaeological investigation of subsurface deposits must remain an essential component of cultural heritage assessment, and that monitoring during construction impacts can never be used as a substitute for this key management step.

Endnotes

1. Kelvin Officer, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd, Canberra. The Navin Officer team has conducted the cultural heritage assessments for most of the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project since 1994.
2. The AACAI has independently lobbied NPWS, where the need to consider subsurface materials was both stressed in written form and through interview with Jason Ardler, the Director of Cultural Heritage, at which time assurances were given. The President of AACAI, Peter Veth, has indicated that it is likely that the professional bodies (AAA/AACAI/ASHA) will be making further representations to both the government and opposition, and that the Minister may end up having to deal with a very 'expensive' and indefensible exercise.

Developing Standards for Historical Archaeological work in NSW¹

by Denis Gojak²

In 1998 the NSW Heritage Office's Archaeological Advisory Panel (HO AAP; now non-operational), of which I was a member, endorsed a proposal to examine the issue of standards in historical archaeology, with the aim of identifying either existing or new standards and guidelines that could be either adopted or encouraged within the profession. At that time the HO had already released Archaeological assessment guidelines, a manual for cemetery and related human remains issues, and had input into other HO guidelines and standards for archaeology as part of the heritage system. The first version of the NPWS Aboriginal Heritage guidelines had also been released and was

being tested by Aboriginal archaeologists. Although the existing documents made a considerable difference in the conduct and consistency of work carried out in an environmental impact context, they were addressing only one small part of the range of archaeological activity for which the HO had statutory responsibility. There was essentially nothing to ensure quality at the initial data gathering level. There was nothing to control the identification and recording of sites, excavation and management of relics.

As a result the AAP embarked on what turned out to be an overly ambitious program of workshopping its way towards an approach. The

AAP provides advice to the Heritage Council and the HO's own archaeologists, and consists of representatives of other statutory bodies with archaeological concerns, and archaeologists in teaching and consultancy. A general invitation to the professionals working in NSW resulted in a large number of people offering to participate in working groups that would report back to the larger group. Our approach was to set up three working groups to look at the major statutory responsibilities:

- Site identification – survey standards, site recording, site identification
- Excavation – approaches, methods, standards of acceptable excavation and post-excavation analysis
- Artefacts – curation, databases, storage, conservation and collection management.

The proliferation of urban excavations from the late 1980s highlighted the diversity of strictly non-comparable artefact typologies, excavation terminology and analytical standards that were being used. These were the result of a discipline that was, and still partly is, peopled by refugees from other types of archaeology, bringing with them their experience in Middle Eastern, Australian Aboriginal, maritime and other types of archaeology. The loss of full-time teaching in historical archaeology at Sydney University was another strong disincentive to the creation of a 'Sydney' style of excavation, as new practitioners began to come in from Victoria, South Australia and overseas institutions. Neither was there a strong artefactual analytical tradition in Australia, with acknowledged experts in glass, ceramics and other types of material culture developing workable but often idiosyncratic classifications for their finds. The result was a realisation that the major excavations were in danger of producing results that were going to be very difficult to compare, and information would be lost to later users who didn't have the resources to retrieve and rework the original collections.

Given this situation what could be done to increase the consistency and comparability of the work? Standards, meaning everything from legal requirements, professional best practice, checklists, arbitrary but accepted and adopted approaches and others all have their role. The three working groups identified some existing emerging standards that were being developed and which could form the basis for NSW-specific standards. An example was the Dublin Core meta-data standards that are used elsewhere in the social sciences, as was the professional practice guidelines prepared by the UK Institute of Field Archaeologists. These were

generally unknown in Australian practice.

What each of the three working groups, the discussion at the 1998 ASHA Conference and the AACAI presentation earlier this year all reinforced is that the development of the standards were perhaps too closely tied to too many other issues to be dealt with in isolation. Standards for historical archaeological work influence and are in turn influenced by teaching objectives, professional accreditation and ethics, legal requirements and client and customer expectations. As a result the search for, say, appropriate margins of error for recording site boundaries at varying scales became caught up with considering how this was affected by legislation, the capabilities of GPS, how fat or vague lines could be in planning documents and a host of other issues. Not only did the complexity of the issues vex the working groups, but it showed that the solution was still far away. Even if we achieved a set of standards written in blood they would have gone nowhere because they were so contingent on other matters out of our control.

The ASHA conference was to be held in Sydney later that year and progress was timed to have a presentation at the conference to a wider national audience. Each working party produced a report for the conference in the standards workshop. Unfortunately, as with other initiatives in the small historical archaeology community, people's generous participation was not able to be sustained over a length of time. After giving time for months, individuals were clearly running out of steam, and staff movements and changing priorities at the HO meant that the ASHA Conference presentations were as far as the process was to be taken. It remains on hold, and many of us are still keen to see that it is dusted off and pursued; that was the reason the paper was offered, so that collective memory would not forget it and perhaps more voices could join for its completion.

In revisiting the issues for AACAI, with the benefit of four years' reflection, I finished with a list of issues that I thought still needed to be discussed before work on standards continued. These were:

- Does the profession want standards?
- Does any external force have the capacity to force change as part of the process?
- Can standards be developed if the linked issues do not change or follow?
- Does the historical archaeological community have sufficient scale to create the necessary structures to independently develop, maintain and audit standards?

- Who pays for all this – and does the increased cost of compliance reflect a net benefit to the community?
- What are the public policy implications for continuing as is, or changing?

Despite creeping cynicism in my old age I was heartened by the Townsville mega-conference's willingness to at least engage with many of these linked issues, especially teaching and professional accreditation. As professional historical archaeology is such a small

community in NSW it may be better to let the bigger grouping be the instigator of change and to focus on small and manageable parts of the issue with the NSW Heritage Office.

Endnotes

1. Paper delivered at the AACAI NSW Occasional Meeting, 7 April 2003.
2. Banksia Heritage & Archaeology

National Archaeology Week: History in Ruins¹

by Prof. Richard Mackay, AM²

Urban archaeology in Australia provides opportunities for archaeologists to create connections between the community and their heritage. Archaeology can reveal stories and aspects of history not recorded through traditional documentary sources, evocative and tangible sites and a personal connection between people and places.

This public presentation, offered during the first National Archaeology Week, was an illustrated talk that relied heavily on visual presentation of different sites and interpretation techniques and devices for urban archaeology.

Examples were presented of case studies where archaeology has assisted in addressing what may be inappropriate stereotypes. At the Cumberland/Gloucester Street site in Sydney's Rocks, the BIG DIG has questioned traditional perceptions of convicts and the convict period, replacing it with a notion of 'convict consumerism'. The excavation reports have been privately published and there are a large number of academic and more popular publications which create varied opportunities for people to use the project to understand the past.

Similarly, work extending over more than a decade at the 'Little Lonsdale' site in Melbourne (Austral Archaeology, Godden Mackay Logan and the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University) has called in to question the classic stereotypes of so-called slums. The 2002/2003 project

at 'Little Lon' was also remarkable because of the interactive public program undertaken involving university student and community participation, site tours, viewing platforms and widespread media coverage (see report in *AACAI Newsletter* No. 92, April 2003). One highlight for the archaeological team was the image of archaeologists Professor Tim Murray and Justin McCarthy jostling with their favourite artefacts for prime position in front of avid media cameras (see figure).

The tangible experience of history through archaeological sites is a contemporary issue in Australia, where the statutory framework has sometimes been biased towards investigation at the expense of conservation. This situation contrasts with American and European examples at places such as Jamestown (USA)



and York (United Kingdom), where in situ conservation is a major theme, lending additional historic dimensions as places evolve. However, recent trends in urban Australia have also seen growing focus on prospects for use of real fabric as an interpretation aid, through ongoing conservation.

While presented for a popular audience, the presentation also considered questions relating to archaeological data-sets and best-practice research framework. There is a growing school of thought that consideration of appropriate 'community deliverables', or even event-based archaeology has a place that is as valid as more academic research frameworks. After all, the statutory basis for archaeological investigation, which is at the heart of the livelihood of many consultants, is ultimately dependent on a legal framework that is itself connected to community perceptions of the public good.

There is more to be done and opportunities should be exploited for connecting the community with its past, as represented in the archaeological record. The paper concluded with a brief showcase of two educational kits: the BIG DIG kit produced by Godden Mackay Logan for the Cumberland/Gloucester Street site, (with the aid of a grant from the NSW Heritage Assistance Program); and 'Digging for Gold!' — a collaborate effort between Godden Mackay Logan and the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University. Both kits can be ordered through Astarte Educational Resources: www.astarte.com.au.

Endnotes

1. Paper delivered at the AACAI NSW Occasional Meeting 15 May 2003.
2. Godden Mackay Logan

NEW COMMONWEALTH HERITAGE REGIME

The heritage amendments to the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* have passed through the Senate. Environment Australia advises that new laws that were passed in the Australian Parliament on 21 August will combine the most successful elements of the old system with a number of new features including:

- the creation of a National Heritage List
- the creation of a Commonwealth Heritage List
- the creation of a new advisory body, the Australian Heritage Council
- the retention of the Register of the National Estate
- increased protection for places on the Register.

The next step is the final vote in the House of Representatives, which is scheduled for 8 September.

The Commonwealth Government has

introduced three Bills into Parliament, which will identify, conserve and protect places of national heritage significance, provide for the identification and management of Commonwealth heritage places and establish the Australian Heritage Council.

The new heritage regime will operate through:

- a list of places of national heritage significance,
- the establishment of a new Commonwealth Heritage List and
- the creation of an independent expert body to advise the Minister on the listing and protection of heritage places - the Australian Heritage Council.

The new legislation will focus the Commonwealth's responsibility on places of national importance and on heritage areas owned or leased by the Commonwealth.

The Bills were originally introduced into Parliament in December 2000 and were before

the Senate awaiting debate at the time the 2001 election was called. Since that time, a number of amendments have been made to the Bills to implement the Government's election commitments in relation to the Register of the National Estate and adopting best practice heritage management approaches by Commonwealth agencies. The Bills have also been amended to allow the listing of heritage places overseas that are of special importance to Australians.

The National Heritage List

Listing

The new National Heritage List will comprise places or groups of places that are of outstanding significance to the nation. As well as places in Australia, important places overseas such as Anzac Cove could be included in the List. Overseas heritage places of national significance will only be listed with the agreement of the sovereign country in which they are located.

There will be a public nomination process, and the Minister may invite nominations of places within a specified theme, such as Federation, Indigenous rock art, Australian eucalypts, gold rushes, etc. A new expert advisory body, the Australian Heritage Council, will assess nominated places against the listing criteria, prescribed in regulations to the Act, and advise the Government on the heritage significance of places proposed for entry in the List. Public comments will be invited on proposed listings and the Council will assess any comments received during this process.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage will make the final decision on entry of places in the National Heritage List. Gazettal of a place on the List may include a statement by the Minister on management and funding arrangements.

If a proposed national heritage place requires urgent protection, an emergency listing provision would protect the place while the Council undertakes an assessment of the heritage values of the place.

Protection

National heritage places will be protected consistent with the Commonwealth's constitutional powers. Protection regimes will also be established through accreditation and bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and the States. Management plans and conservation agreements similar to those already in the *Environment Protection and*

Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 will allow the Commonwealth to make agreements with owners, including private land-owners, to help conserve heritage places.

The establishment of a list of places of national heritage significance will become an additional matter of *national environmental significance* under the EPBC Act. This means that, in general, the Minister must give approval before anyone can undertake activities that have, will have or are likely to have, a significant impact on the heritage values of a place on the National Heritage List.

The proposed legislation will require the Minister to ensure that there are approved management plans for listed places owned by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth can take actions only if they are consistent with these plans.

The Commonwealth Heritage List

As well as the National Heritage List, the Bill to amend the EPBC Act will also provide for a list of heritage places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth. This will include places on or in Commonwealth lands or waters and ownership identified by the Australian Heritage Council as meeting prescribed heritage criteria and which the Minister decides warrant the protection provided by entry in the Commonwealth Heritage List.

A nomination to this List will be assessed against criteria prescribed in regulations to the Act. The Minister may directly enter places in the Commonwealth Heritage List if:

- the place is included in the Register of the National Estate (including the Interim List)
- the place is within a Commonwealth area
- the Minister is satisfied that the place has one or more Commonwealth heritage values.

Duties of Commonwealth agencies

Commonwealth agencies that own or lease heritage places will be required to assist the Minister and the Australian Heritage Council to identify and assess the heritage values of these places. Commonwealth agencies will be required to develop heritage strategies, produce a register of the heritage places under their control and, when selling or leasing a Commonwealth Heritage place, endeavour to ensure the ongoing protection of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place. A Commonwealth agency will also be required to ask the Minister for advice about taking an action, if the action has, will have, or is likely to

have, a significant impact on a Commonwealth heritage place.

Listing & Protection

The Bill provides a nomination, assessment and listing process for the Commonwealth Heritage List that is similar to the process prescribed for the National Heritage List. A similar framework for management and reporting will also apply.

Most places on the Commonwealth Heritage List will be protected under existing provisions of the EPBC Act. In essence, this means that no-one may take an action without the Minister's approval, if it has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on the heritage values of a Commonwealth place.

Under the amended EPBC Act, heritage places will also be protected from actions by the Commonwealth. This means that the Commonwealth must not take an action inside or outside Australia without the Minister's approval if it has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on the heritage values of a place.

A Commonwealth agency that owns or controls one or more places must make a heritage strategy within two years of the commencement of this Act or after it first owns or controls a place. The strategy sets out the period in which the agency will conduct a program to identify Commonwealth Heritage values, produce a register of Commonwealth Heritage values and make management plans for Commonwealth Heritage places.

The Australian Heritage Council

The Australian Heritage Council will replace the Australian Heritage Commission as the Commonwealth's expert advisory body on heritage. The role of the Council will be to provide independent and expert advice to the Minister on the identification, conservation and protection of places on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List.

The Council, consisting of experts in the fields of natural, Indigenous and historic heritage, will assess nominations in relation to the listing of places on the National and the Commonwealth

Heritage lists. The Council will also be responsible for keeping the Register of the National Estate, which includes the ability to add or remove places from the Register.

The Register of the National Estate

In line with the Government's election commitments, the Register of the National Estate will continue in a modified form that will allow for adding or removing places from the Register. Information about places on the Register will be maintained as a publicly accessible database of Australian's natural and cultural heritage places. The database will be modernised and upgraded to ensure its continued availability for the identification and protection of heritage.

More information

For more information on the new heritage legislation see

www.ea.gov.au/heritage/law/heritageact/index

To look at the debate, see Hansard for the Senate, beginning 13 August 2003

www.aph.gov.au/hansard/hanssen

Copies of the bills and the various amendments proposed and/or agreed to can be accessed at:

- Environment & Heritage Legislative Amendment Bill
<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/browse.aspx?NodeID=71>
- Australian Heritage Council Bill
<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/browse.aspx?NodeID=30>
- Australian Heritage Council (Consequential & Transitional Provisions) Bill
<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/browse.aspx?NodeID=31>

Endnotes

1. Information sheet provided by Environment Australia

AACAI at WAC-5

by Ian Lilley¹

The most recent Plenary of the World Archaeological Congress was held in Washington DC in late June, just before the heat really set in (and it was sometimes over 100 degrees in the old money as it was, and very humid!). The Conference was held at the Catholic University in north-eastern Washington, in a locality with the highest number of Catholic institutions in the world outside the Vatican, including the extraordinary National Basilica in one corner of the campus. Many people stayed on site, but the turnout was so large that significant numbers were housed further afield (Holiday Inn did very well, thank you...). In the end, some 1200 people from 65 countries made it, despite administrative problems with visas for people from places such as Nigeria and Iran. Australia was well-represented, as usual, seeing numbers of Aboriginal people attend as well as archaeologists from all parts of the country and expats such as Huw Barton (Leicester) and Lynn Meskell (Columbia).

The meeting covered a great diversity of themes, including among others ethics and human rights, teaching and training, art and symbolism, diasporas (co-organised by yours truly), colonialism, identity and social responsibility, archaeo-astronomy, the heritage of war, indigenous archaeologies, historical archaeology, heritage management and underwater archaeology. Within each theme there was one or more sessions dealing with specific aspects of the overarching topic. Thus the diasporas theme, to take an example with which I am familiar, included three sessions on different issues concerning the African Diaspora as well as my Comparative Diasporas session, which aimed to balance things a little but considered questions as diverse as the historical Chinese diaspora in Australia, the Lapita diaspora in the Pacific some 3000–3500 years ago and the Linearbandkeramik dispersal in early Neolithic Europe. There was also a number of special events, including public lectures, major plenaries and specialised workshops run by delegates, as well as the likes of the World Bank. There were also dedicated museum tours, exhibitions and social events,

including embassy receptions and a conference dinner with an utterly amazing fountain that splashed chocolate rather than water! Will anyone ever top that? An extremely important feature of the program was the central and very welcome roles played by the Getty Conservation Institute in California and the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History and Museum of the American Indian in DC.

As might be anticipated, there were sessions, workshops and a great deal of impassioned discussion in the meetings of the WAC Assembly, Council and Executive focused on the war in Iraq and its impact on that country's cultural heritage and the practice of archaeology in times of conflict. Some people at the conference had come to Washington direct from Iraq, and were able to present up to the minute reports on matters such as the robberies from the museums in Baghdad and elsewhere and the astonishing level of looting of sites, especially in southern Iraq. It was also revealed that archaeologists had been engaged by the British Ministry of Defence well before the outbreak of hostilities to assist them to avoid targeting heritage sites. This raised the issue of 'embedded archaeologists', and led to motions concerning the necessity for the separation of archaeologists and armies in much the same way that aid organisations work between the armed camps rather than from one or another.

All in all, it was an enormously successful meeting. Australia did very well in the end, too. Although Robin Torrence (Australian Museum) stepped down as Treasurer, Claire Smith (Flinders) was elected President and I was elected Secretary. Just before the conference, Sean Ulm (UQ) was elected to replace Claire as Junior Representative (Asia-Pacific). The next WAC Plenary is scheduled for the Caribbean in 4 years' time. Be there, or be square!

Endnotes

1. AT SIS Unit, University of Queensland.

Book Reviews

Sydney's Aboriginal Past: Investigating the archaeological and historical records.

Val Attenbrow, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2002.

by Dr Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy¹

I was very pleased to be given the opportunity by the AACAI to review this book as I have already had many occasions to refer to it for contextual material in my day-to-day work as a consultant in Sydney. In this volume Attenbrow has successfully produced a book that has the capacity to engage the public as well as provide an excellent regional overview for students and professionals engaged in archaeological and heritage work in the Sydney area. Interstate visitors to our household have been quick to borrow it to take advantage of the places to visit in the back of the book. These places consist of easily accessible Aboriginal sites around the Sydney area that are open to the public and which for the most part have at least some on-site interpretation.

For those of us working in the Sydney area the book provides an overview of useful regional statistics such as site types, range and number of excavated sites and dated sites. It also provides a brief overview of the pre- and post-contact history of the Sydney area, with ample reference to primary sources. The notes and reference list will provide a great starting point for people who need to delve deeper into specific aspects and areas. This was an ambitious project and at times there is some disjunction between the levels of information as it slips from the very specific to the general, but this is more an artefact of the available primary information than any real lapse on the author's part.

Students of archaeology and Aboriginal studies based in the Sydney region will find this book extremely useful. The information is largely descriptive providing a useful source of information, although with little analysis of the

historic record. It would have been good to see Attenbrow explore the role of key Aboriginal figures such as Colbee, Bungaree and Pemulway in terms of Aboriginal resistance and responses to European invasion. Whereas Pemulway adopted a strategy of open resistance, there is evidence to suggest that Colbee chose a strategy based on the style of Philip himself – that of the charming double agent. When it comes to the archaeological record Attenbrow is on more comfortable ground and presents debated interpretations objectively, while clearly stating her own opinion – for instance in the case of the conflicting claims for tribal and language boundaries around the Sydney area and particularly the area between Port Jackson and Broken Bay.

At the end one is left with the impression that the story of Sydney's Aboriginal Past is now complete and all that can be known about the archaeology and the people of the Sydney region is enclosed within the books covers. I was slightly disappointed that Attenbrow did not go one step further and identify the gaps in research and knowledge and perhaps outline her views on the strategic research needed to fill them. Perhaps this is the step-off point for a sequel!

Sydney's Aboriginal Past is an excellent example of the synthesis of many years of archaeological work within the region to produce a coherent story. It demonstrates that it is possible to draw together the various archaeological and historic sources from both research and contract work and weave them into an important resource document. Now all we need is a similar book on the Hunter, the Illawarra and about half a dozen regions where similar amounts of data exist. It seems Val Attenbrow has taken up the challenge of producing a regional synthesis of archaeological and historic data. Will anyone else follow suit?

Endnotes

1. Heritage Consultant, Sydney

Journey to the Stone Country

Alex Miller, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 2002.
(Winner 2003 Miles Franklin Literary Award)

by Helen Brayshaw¹

I have recently read this book, set in an area of Queensland with which I was once familiar, the Bowen Basin, in the hinterland of Mackay. It was just within the southern compass of the area I investigated as part of my PhD, which I completed through the History Department at James Cook University in Townsville, and it was where I carried out some of the earliest consultancies in Queensland after the passing of the Queensland Relics Act.

The story starts off as the heroine, an academic at the University in Melbourne, leaves her husband, another academic who is having a fling with one of his students, and returns to her roots in north Queensland. She stays with a friend who is a consultant archaeologist, no less. The friend had been a colleague at the History Department of the university, and set off to Townsville to establish the first cultural survey business in north Queensland to service the new Cultural Record Act.

The clients of the friend's business are the local Indigenous community. 'They hire me to help them do the surveys and write the reports. They send along a couple of their cultural field officers who are supposed to know the country and we search together for evidence of the old people. I record our finds on the GPS and the mine foots the bill.' She describes herself as 'the meat in the sandwich between the traditional owners and the multinationals'.

Now I found this book interesting for a number of reasons, including the well researched cultural survey process, the area where the story is set and the issues addressed.

There is a very strong sense of place. For example I found myself getting out my maps to see which road they were driving along, where they were camping and surveying, and whether I had been to or through any of these places. The author, Alex Miller, worked as an itinerant stockman in the region in the 1950s, and his landscapes are very evocative. The locational focus is the country at the headwaters of the Suttor River, land of the Jangga Aboriginal people, and also where the heroine grew up on a cattle station.

The heroine meets one-time ringer and now

cultural representative of the local Jangga people. They fall in love and the story traces the complexities of their shared history, and the problems they encounter. They investigate an area on Urannah Creek which is to be dammed to supply water to Bowen. The bitter local guardian of Aboriginal history confronts them with the story of a massacre in which her grandfather had been involved.

Through the love affair the story focuses on the terms of possession of Australia, exploring the notions of home and belonging, subjects which Peter Read has examined by a different method in his books *Returning to Nothing* and *Belonging*. In this book Alex Miller also explores the need for reconciliation felt by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Through the rich detail of characters as well as landscapes, Alex Miller shows the novel to be a powerful medium, capable of portraying so much more than the consulting report can. I think a great movie could be made from this story. The fact that consulting archaeology is the chosen vehicle for a novel which has won the Miles Franklin Literary Award for 2003 shows how mainstream the profession has become. In time AACAI membership will doubtless burgeon in response to this book.

References

- Brayshaw, Helen 1990 *Well Beaten Paths*. Department of History, James Cook University.
- Read, Peter 1996 *Returning to Nothing*. Cambridge University Press, Australia.
- Read, Peter 2000 *Belonging*. Cambridge University Press, Australia.

Endnotes

1. Heritage Consultant, Sydney

Note

What Helen doesn't mention in her review is that the main characters in the book are closely based on 'real people', who are long terms friends of the author.

The other matter that is worth reinforcing is that the damming of the Urannah Creek and the consequent flooding of a significant portion of landscape, replete with outstanding natural and cultural heritage, has at various times been a real threat. A recent re-tabling of the proposal has been dropped; however, it is unlikely that it has been permanently shelved.

Jane Harrington

News from Godden Mackay Logan

by Jennie Lindbergh

Godden Mackay Logan has been growing. The company now has more archaeologists – Matthew Kelly and Anne Mackay have been joined by Andrew Sneddon and Cathy Tucker, both of whom were involved in the Casselden Place excavation in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, a joint project (Godden Mackay Logan in association with Archaeology Program La Trobe University and Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd). The industrial archaeology team has also grown with Tony Brassil and Jennie Lindbergh being joined by Karina Waddell. Lisa Newell, Manager Archaeology, also joined the company this year.

Godden Mackay Logan is currently involved in a number of projects around Sydney.

Andrew Sneddon has been monitoring excavations at the State Heritage Registered Prince Henry Hospital in Little Bay, which boasts evidence of extensive Indigenous occupation (including an ochre site and sandstone markings) as well as nineteenth and early twentieth-century medical structures. The site has a colourful history including the construction of wards along lines recommended by Florence Nightingale and wards designed for servicemen returning from the Great War during the influenza outbreak. Andrew has also been involved in work at the Glebe Depot, a site that incorporates structures designed by Walter Burley Griffin, and which is of particular interest to the Walter Burley Griffin Society. This work aims to expose a chimney base, column bases and garden beds constructed to Burley Griffin's design in 1933.

Godden Mackay Logan has also been working on various components of the Parramatta Rail Link project with Anne Mackay as the principal archaeologist. Anne also directed a test excavation at a site in Gloucester Street, The Rocks, earlier this year and has recently undertaken monitoring in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Matthew Kelly has also been involved in ongoing work at the Mint Building in Macquarie Street for some time. Documentation of structures dating to the earliest periods of the site's use, including substantial structural

remains from the mid-nineteenth century is now well in hand. The Mint is being developed in a manner sympathetic to its heritage value for re-use as the head office of the Historic Houses Trust.

Andrew Sneddon, Cathy Tucker and Matthew Kelly are also undertaking excavations at the Mountain Street site in Ultimo. This site had been a swamp on which slaughterhouses had been constructed and which was also a city slum. Excavations have exposed the remains of terrace houses, cesspits and other structures dating to the mid-nineteenth century through to 1907. The site is proving to be an interesting study in how the residents coped with inundation and seepage in their yards and houses, while living in a flood-prone and tidal area.

And of course the big news for us was the naming of the Godden Mackay Logan Managing Director, Professor Richard Mackay, in the Queen's Birthday Honours as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for service to cultural heritage management and archaeology, and to youth through the Scouting movement.

CONFERENCE NOTICES

AAA CONFERENCE 2003

4–7 December 2003

The Station Resort, Jindabyne, Snowy Mountains, NSW

Hosted by The Centre for Archaeological Research, ANU

Major theme

Colder and drier for longer? Implications of the 'new' Late Glacial Maximum (30–20,000 BP) for humans in Australia and the region.

Second Circular: Call for papers now on the web at

<http://car.anu.edu.au/AAA.html>

<http://www.australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au/index.html>

For further details, please contact CAR: 02 6125 0470, car@anu.edu.au

Posters

Participants are encouraged to submit posters for the conference. As an additional enticement there will be a \$500 prize for the best poster. In addition a number of posters summarising NAW in the different States and Territories will be available to view. If interested in submitting a poster please contact Michael Westaway as soon as possible: m.westaway@nma.gov.au

ISLANDS AND COASTLINES CONFERENCE

Norfolk Island, 1–5 Oct 2003

The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology (ASHA) and

The Australian Association for Maritime History (AAMH)

The Conference theme will focus on aspects of the maritime history and historical archaeology of island and coastal communities. The theme, however, takes an inter-disciplinary perspective and encourages participants to consider island and coastal communities as well as the role of the sea in human history in the widest sense.

We also hope to have sessions that combine both maritime history and historical archaeology on topics such as island communities, ports and harbours, coastal defences, fishing, sealing and whaling.

For further information contact:

Dr Mark Staniforth
Program Convenor
email: mark.staniforth@flinders.edu.au

The Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003 Maritime Frontiers: Historical and Technological Perspectives

9–13 November 2003

Port Arthur, Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania

Hosted by the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) with the support of the Tasmanian Heritage Office and Heritage Victoria. The venue is the Port Arthur Historic Site (<http://www.portarthur.org.au>).

The general format of the conference will be as follows:

9 November 2003: Opening night

10–11 November 2003: Papers

12–13 November 2003: Workshops and Meetings

Suggested theme topics

- The archaeology of convict experience
- The archaeology of new maritime industries
- Innovation and change in maritime technologies
- Watercraft as technological and cultural vector
- Technology on the frontier
- Technological tools for maritime archaeology
- Technological approaches to management, education and tourism

The first module of an AIMA/NAS Maritime Archaeology course is currently scheduled for Saturday 8, and Sunday 9 November. To book a place, or find out more about this see www.aima.iinet.net.au, or contact Nathan Richards:

nathan.richards@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

INDIGENOUS RESEARCHERS' FORUM 2003

'Indigenous Research – What's It About?'

1–3 October 2003, Canberra, ACT

Hosted by AIATSIS in partnership with ANU and the University of Canberra.

The IRF is an initiative of the six Indigenous Centres of Excellence located at various Australian universities.

The IRF has national significance and explores and advocates Indigenous agendas and issues

in research, in addition to providing opportunities and encouragement to emerging Indigenous researchers.

Further Information

For initial updates please contact Mr Michael Whaler in the first instance: michael.whaler@aiatsis.gov.au. To express interest in presenting at the IRF 2003, or for more detailed enquiries, please contact Brett Galt-Smith: brett.galt-smith@aiatsis.gov.au.

An IRF 2003 website will be established on the AIATSIS site at www.aiatsis.gov.au

Australia ICOMOS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Telling Tales: Interpretation in the Conservation and Design Process

28–29 November 2003, Chowder Bay, Sydney

The conference will discuss and develop draft guidelines to the Burra Charter on interpretation and contribute to the input from Australian ICOMOS members the International ICOMOS Ename Charter. Please note papers will not be called for.

Enquires to the Conference Coordinator

Stephen Couling:
stephencouling@design5.com.au

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE STATE OF AUSTRALIAN CITIES

3–5 December 2003, Sydney

This conference will be the first academically focused national conference on urban issues in Australia for at least a decade. In a period when Australian cities have undergone substantial change, there has been no comparable academic gathering to explore the processes and outcomes of these changes or their policy implications.

The conference is sponsored by five universities and underwritten by the New South Wales, Victorian and Australian Capital Territory governments.

For more information please go to:

<http://www.urbanfrontiers.uws.edu.au/new/conference>

Seminar programs

AACAI NSW Occasional Meetings

All presentations are in the Benledi Room of Glebe Library (Corner Glebe Point & Wigram Rds, Glebe, Sydney).

Refreshments at 6.30; talks, presentations etc. start at 7 pm; dinner afterwards at a local restaurant, for those who want to go on arguing, gossiping etc.

Charge for refreshments and talk: \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members; no charge for students and speakers.

Thursday October 9th: Dr Annie Clarke (University of Sydney) will present a talk titled 'Archaeology and Native Title at Yilpara, Blue Mud Bay, eastern Arnhem Land'.

Monday November 3rd: (to be confirmed) **Robynne Mills (Mills Archaeological & Heritage Services Pty Ltd)** and **Megan Mebberson (Australian Museum Business Services)** will talk about the archaeology of the M7 Sydney Orbital Motorway, particularly the Plumpton Ridge area.

Centre for Archaeological Research (ANU) Friday afternoon seminar program

Venue: Manning Clark Centre Theatre 4, ANU

Time: 3pm

October 10: Steven Ellis Dept. Classical Archaeology, Sydney University: The Pompeian bar and the city: Defining food and drink outlets and identifying their place in the urban environment

October 17: Dr Pim Allison Archaeology and Anthropology: Mapping artefacts and activities within Roman military camps

October 24: Dr Peter Dowling Visiting Fellow, Archaeology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts: Tuberculosis in precontact and postcontact Aboriginal populations

**Monash University Centre for
Australian Indigenous Studies**

Semester 2 Seminar Series

8 October, Liz Reed, CAIS: *'Some preliminary ideas on William Thomas as "friend" of the Aborigines'*

15 October, Lisa Palmer, Melbourne University: *'Agreements, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements with Indigenous Peoples in Settler States: their role and relevance for Indigenous and other Australians'*

22 October, Julie Fenwick, Historical Studies: *'Articulating Ideas of Sovereignty: The Tent Embassy and Black Power Movements'*

All enquiries to convenor Jane Lydon:
jane.lydon@arts.monash.edu.au

**Adelaide Heritage Conservation
Seminar: The Conservation of
Cemetery Sites**

24 October 2003

This one day seminar will provide practical advice on the conservation of cemetery sites. Experts will discuss differences between cemeteries and burial rites; the causes of deterioration; the conservation of stone monuments and metal elements; the use of modern products to make good old problems; finding old skills today, and the role of volunteers in caring for this important part of our history. The presentations will be supplemented with a site visit to historic West Terrace Cemetery.

Venue: Edmund Wright House, King William Street, Adelaide

Time: 9 am – 5 pm

Please contact Fran Stropin from the Heritage Branch, Department for Environment and Heritage, on

stropin.francesca@saugov.sa.gov.au

Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of AACAI, the Executive Committee or the Editor.