

April 2009



**CAS/CAR 2009 Public Lecture
Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6
7:30pm Wednesday 15 April 2009**

***The evening lecture series is now a joint production with the ANU Centre
for Archaeological Research (CAR)***

**The Problem of Human Remains in the Anzac Battlefield,
Gallipoli
Peter Dowling**

During several visits to the Anzac Battlefield at Gallipoli, Turkey, since 2003 I have located human remains exposed in areas of high tourist activity lying on road banks and verges which follow the lines of Allied and Turkish front line trenches. These remains are in constant danger of being further disturbed or destroyed by the actions of roadworks, coaches and tourist activity. Despite National Trust representations to government authorities to initiate a conservation strategy to protect and conserve these remains little has been done. This presentation will discuss these issues and propose a conservation strategy.

Dr Peter Dowling is the heritage Officer for the ACT National Trust. He studied archaeology and biological anthropology at ANU. He has made several visits to the battlefields of Gallipoli as a researcher and as a tour guide.

All welcome. Entry is by gold coin donation at the door.

***Please join us afterwards for light supper,
to meet the speaker and continue the discussion.***

Forthcoming lectures and events

Date	Event/ speaker	Venue	Topic
Mon May 18	Trivia Night	ANU Bar	National Archaeology Week – open to all
Wed May 20	Dr Jo McDonald	Manning Clark Theatre 6, ANU	National Archaeology Week -The Slaying Of The Narrabeen Man
Sat May 23	Workshop	Old Canberra House, 9 am – 4.30 pm	National Archaeology Week - ACT Historic Archaeology Workshop
June 17	Dr Lynley Wallis	Manning Clark Theatre 6, ANU	Impacts on the cultural heritage and archaeological sites of Iraq during the Coalition Invasion
July 15	Doug Williams	Haydon Allen Tank ANU	Comparing surveys at Crace and the Headquarters Joint Operations Command - the new defence headquarters near Bungendore
August 19	Prof Graham Connah	Manning Clark Theatre 6, ANU	Niger, Lake Chad

CAS 2009 Committee Contact Details

- **President:** Helen Cooke - the.cookies@bigpond.com
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- **Secretary:** Sue Aylen
- **Membership Secretary:** Wendy Lees
- **Committee Members:** Laura Breen, Faye Powell, Bob Legge
- **Newsletter Editor:** Helen and the crew
- **Web Master:** Russell Kightley Media

Have you renewed your membership for 2009?

CAS needs your support to keep encouraging interest in archaeology.



Forthcoming Events

Please pass on these notices or the attached flyers to your colleagues and friends.

Crinigan's Hut Open Day

Wanderer Circuit Amaroo (In the playground area)

Saturday 4 April 2009, 11.00 - 3.00

Bush music and dancing 2pm!

Guides and tours

Bring your family and friends and join the Crinigans' Family, Canberra Archaeological Society and Gungahlin community to share the story of Crinigan's Hut

Phone 0408 443 243 for information

Sausage sizzle and drinks for sale by Rotary Club of Mitchell Gungahlin

This event is part of the 2009 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival

The workshop below is CAS's initiative to promote the protection, conservation and interpretation of Canberra and region's archaeological heritage. We hope this will be the first of a series and with the other sponsors we can stimulate the formation of a lobby group to raise the profile of historic sites sadly in need of conservation:

ACT Historical Archaeology Workshop

(and some sites that are not yet archaeological but are heading that way!)

Call for papers

Saturday 23 May 2009, 9am - 4.30pm

Conference Room: Old Canberra House, Lennox Crossing, Acton

Themes: specific historic sites, regions, conservation examples or priorities, ghosts of heritage past, cultural heritage surveys and their implementation.

Short presentations are sought from archaeologists, historians and others interested in conserving and interpreting historic heritage in the ACT. Please send an outline or summary of your talk to contact@cas.asn.au or phone 0408 443 243 for further information.

This is a National Archaeology Week event sponsored by:

Canberra Archaeological Society Inc; Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage UC; Centre for Archaeological Research; Institute of Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts; National Trust (ACT); Research School of Humanities ANU

There will be a modest charge to cover refreshments and light lunch, and the day will finish off with drinks.



Queanbeyan's Story - The Beginning

Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum opening of their next exhibition by the Mayor of Queanbeyan 18 April, 11.30 for 12, at the Museum, 10 Farrer Pl, Queanbeyan.

Entertainment and refreshments; enquiries to gbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au or

Kerrie Ruth on 02 6297 2730.

AGHS - The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action. See the website for outings and lectures.

<http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/>

Oldest Human Hair Found in Hyena Poop Fossil?

Charles Q. Choi for [National Geographic News](#) February 6, 2009

The oldest known human hairs could be the strands discovered in fossil hyena poop found in a South African cave, a new study hints.

Researchers discovered the rock-hard hyena dung near the Sterkfontein caves, where many early human ancestor fossils have been found. Each white, round fossil turd, or coprolite, is roughly 0.8 inch (2 centimetres) across. They were found embedded in sediments 195,000 to 257,000 years old. Until now, the oldest known human hair was from a 9,000-year-old Chilean mummy.

The sizes and shapes of the coprolites and their location suggest they came from brown hyenas, which still live in the region's caves today.

It's not clear which species the newfound human hairs are from, since the human fossil record for this time span is exceedingly limited, the researchers say.

But the hairs' age "covers just before when we think modern humans emerged, and overlaps with the existence and end of *Homo heidelbergensis*," said study co-author Lucinda Backwell, a paleoanthropologist at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"The hairs could belong to either of them, or of course to [a species] not yet recognized," added Backwell, whose findings appeared online January 31 in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.

Backwell and her colleagues used tweezers to extract 40 fossilized hairs resembling glass needles from one of the hyena coprolites.

Scanning-electron-microscope images revealed wavy bands of scales on the hairs—a pattern typical of modern primates, with human hair being the closest match.

The Oracle of Delphi – High as a Kite?

*Breathe, breathe in the air
Don't be afraid to care...*

Look around and choose your own ground

Pink Floyd 1973

The Mediterranean region is criss-crossed by a giant cobweb or earth-quake faults. These lines of geological violence are concentrated along the edges of the two main tectonic plates, North Africa and Europe, which are slowly but continually grinding into each other. The fissures and faults caused by the stress of collision extend well into the interior of each main plate. The result is that virtually anywhere in the Mediterranean is close to a fault line that could rupture and shake the earth.

Faults are also important pathways for subterranean water to rise to the surface and for rivers to flow besides (a local example of this is the Murrumbidgee flowing alongside and against the high hills above Tharwa which are caused by uplifting along a major fault line). A reliable source of water is an essential ingredient for any city, which is one reason the ancient Greeks chose the sites for their cities. Probably unbeknown to them at the same time they were building their cities on geological unstable ground. And that is the reason why many ancient Greek cities were troubled or in some cases destroyed by recurring earthquakes.

But it was probably the sometimes spectacular landscapes caused by fault lines that attracted the ancient Greeks to site their cities. One only has to visit Delphi and look over the valley to realise the magnificence of the view. High points overlooking valleys were very attractive places where the temples to the Gods and the political power

base of the rulers were favoured throughout the Greek world. But in the case of Delphi in particular there just may have been another reason for choosing this site. The ancient Greek historian, Plutarch, gives

us a clue. He wrote about the most renowned oracle in the Classical world, the Oracle of Delphi, who in a basement room of the Temple of Apollo, would hang precariously above a chasm in the rock, until the god possessed her in a trance and delivered the prophecies. These prophecies were always rather obscure and open to interpretation. Plutarch, with his keen eye, reckoned that vapours came from the rocks below and the oracle breathed them in. He was right.

The Temple of Apollo at Delphi lies directly on an earthquake fault and hallucinogenic gases can be detected even today. The limestone bedrock contains bitumen, a petrochemical. Friction along the fault line causes it to heat and vaporise. The vapours bubble up through the groundwater, rise through the cracks in the bed rock and end up in the temple basement where the oracle gave her predictions. Recent analysis has found the gas contains small amounts of the drug ethylene, which is highly intoxicating. So the famous Oracle of Delphi was most likely as high as a kite when dispensing her wisdom. Little wonder her prophecies were hard to understand.





But it was not only the Temple of Apollo at Delphi that was constructed over a fault line giving off hallucinogenic gases. It now appears that several Greek temples and cities were specifically so sited. Another World Heritage city, Hierapolis, in western Turkey is just one. In Hierapolis, the basement chambers of the Temple of Apollo (the Plutonium as it was later called) would fill with a dense misty gas emanating from the cracks in the rock. In this case the gas was carbon dioxide which is a heavy gas and would build up from the floor of the chamber towards the ceiling displacing the oxygen making it a very dangerous place to stay any length of time. Strabo reported that any 'living creature that enters will find death upon the instant'. During the early years of the town, priests descended into the Plutonium together with criminals or

animals, held their breath and then came up in order to show that they had superior powers over mere mortal beings.

So, it would seem that the ancient Greek town planners knew a thing or two about the geology of their region, about the cracks in the earth and the strange gasses that emanated from them. They chose the ground and purposely built their cities around these faults which often provided them with a reliable source of fresh water, and a spectacular landscape over which the city centre presided. But even more intriguing and cunning, the town planners and priests deliberately built the major temples over the cracks in the earth to utilise the natural phenomena for a specific purpose.

Dr Peter Dowling

Supercomputer finds oldest English words

Friday, 27 February 2009 ABC Science Online/AFP

The oldest words in the English language include 'I' and 'who', while words like 'dirty' could die out relatively quickly, say UK researchers.

Scientists at the [University of Reading](#) have used a supercomputer called ThamesBlue to model the evolution of words in English and the wider family of Indo-European languages over the last 30,000 years.

They say that the most commonly-used words, which also include the numbers 'two', 'three' and 'five', tend to be the oldest and change most slowly over time. Meanwhile, adjectives like 'dirty' and verbs like 'squeeze' could disappear over the next eight centuries or so, the scientists say.

"The frequency with which the words are used in our common everyday speech is a strong predictor of whether or not they will be retained and words we use a lot tend to be highly conserved," Professor Mark Pagel told BBC radio.

Because there are many different ways of saying 'dirty' in Indo-European languages - currently 46 - it is more likely to die out, the team says, along with, for example, 'push', 'turn', 'wipe' and 'stab'.

The oldest words in circulation today have been in use for at least 10,000 years, the researchers add.

As well as English, other languages in the Indo-European family include Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali.



Important evidence

Australian linguists say the researchers have provided useful evidence that the most commonly used words are conserved the longest.

Julia Miller of [Flinders University](#) in Adelaide says she is finding the same effect in her own studies of idioms. An idiom is an expression that means something other than what is stated literally.

She says many idioms used by older people - such as 'to spend a penny', meaning, 'going to the toilet' - don't tend to be used by younger people and are thus disappearing from the language.

Associate Professor Peter Petersen of the [University of Newcastle](#) says English itself has only been around about 1200 years but equivalents to the words 'who' and 'I' would have occurred in predecessor languages.

Petersen says such words are called 'function words', which are unique and don't tend to have any competition from other words, which is why they tend to stay in language.

He says an example of competition at work is with the word 'go'. In old English there were several words for 'go', including 'gan' and 'wendian' but by 1100 or so, 'wendian' had disappeared.

"We didn't need two verbs doing the same thing," he says. But a little of 'wendian' was kept, in the word 'went', which is the past tense of 'go', says Petersen.

Thorn - Missing Letter of the Alphabet BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2922077>

The thorn, Þ þ, is one of the most fascinating of letters and, in a form unrecognisable to the untrained eye, is still used to convey 'olde-worlde' charm. Twee shop fronts may bear the legend 'Ye Olde Shoppe' in an attempt to recreate a feeling of the medieval, and inevitably the word spelled as 'Ye' will be pronounced by all as 'Yee'.

However, 'Ye Olde Shoppe' ought actually to be pronounced as '*The* Old Shoppe', because the 'Y' derives from a printed form of the thorn.

A Futhorc in the Road

The thorn is a letter which originally derived from a rune. This runic alphabet was called *futhorc* after the sounds of its first six signs and was developed by Germanic peoples at least as early as the 2nd Century AD. Scholars are divided about the futhorc's origin, but it's agreed that some of the signs in the runic alphabets are derived from Italic or Alpine letter forms and others are probably influenced by Latin and Greek letters.

The Font of Wisdom

The thorn was particularly popular as a sign for 'th' in Medieval English, but with the advent of printing came a problem. There was no thorn sign in the printing fonts, as they were usually cast outside of England. So, since the sign for thorn slightly resembled the lower-case 'y', that's what was substituted.

The thorn continued to be used, but printing caused its eventual demise from the English alphabet.



Book worms

News from Yass Books

Dear Booklover,

The financial downturn has more or less wiped out American online sales, but otherwise the book trade is thriving. We acquired some stock from Gilberts, when it closed its doors, including some interesting Australian archaeology texts, and I am on my way to China, hoping to return laden with high-quality works.

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