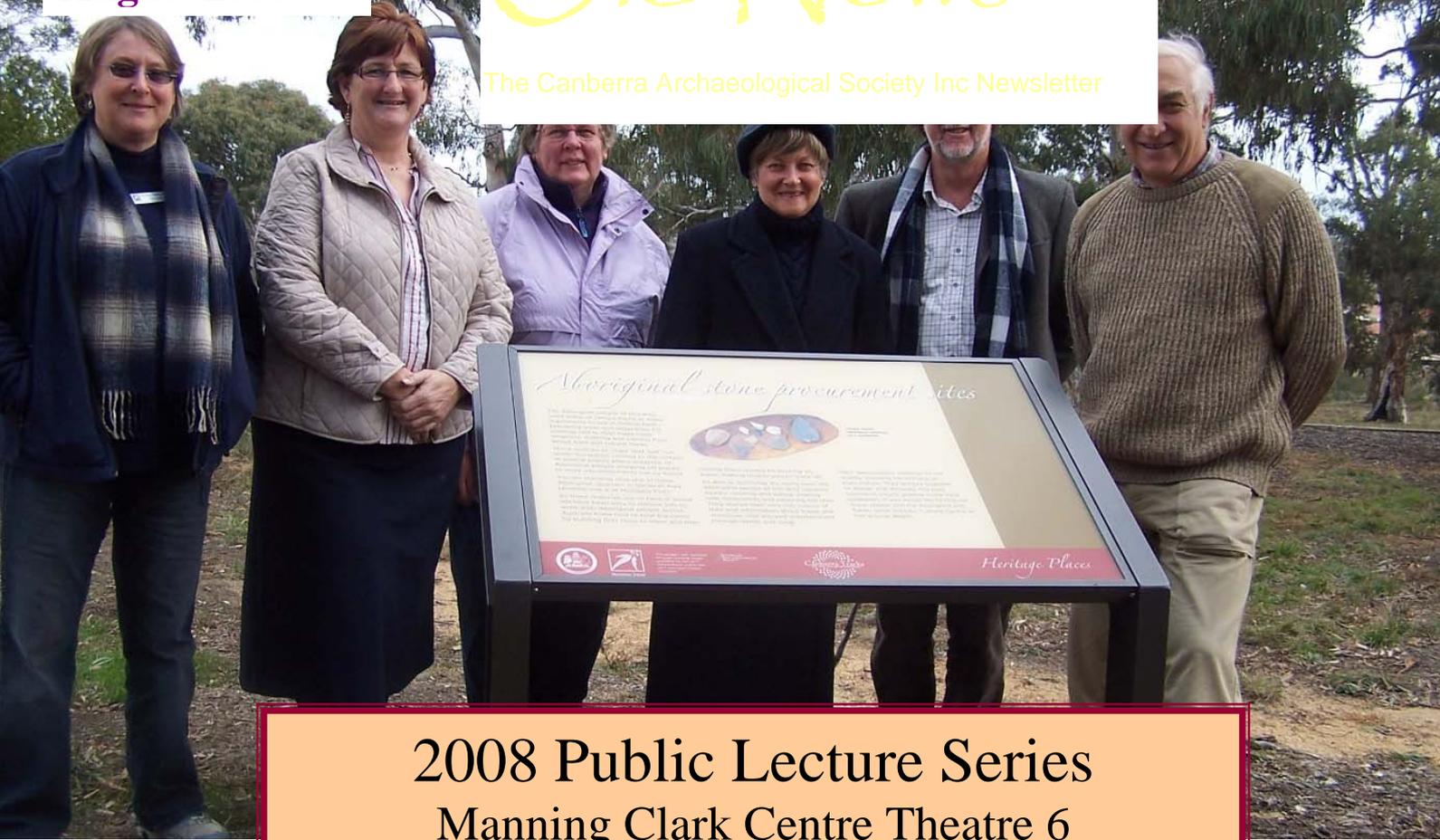


August 2008

Old News

The Canberra Archaeological Society Inc Newsletter



2008 Public Lecture Series Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6 7:30pm Wednesday 20 August

Understanding and Responding to the Destruction of the Murray River

Dr Jessica Weir, Research Fellow, AIATSIS

The need for profound change in our intellectual traditions is a part of the current re-examination of water management in the Murray-Darling Basin. The language of water management has changed to recognise the 'environmental needs' of the river – described as environmental water allocations or environmental flows. But this language continues to position the rivers as just a consumer of water, instead of the source of river water, and is in denial of our dependency on fresh water ecologies for survival.

The scale of fresh water destruction along the Murray demands that we engage in critical thinking about what is 'water'. Our unacknowledged assumptions have trapped our thinking, limited our responses, and continue to disable us from taking the necessary action. We need to push the current re-examination of water management further, and move the focus to our life sustaining connections with rivers; this is what I am calling 'connectivity thinking'. This is part of the intellectual work needed if we are to connect human cultures, practices and life values with other living beings and ecosystems.

***All welcome. Entry is by gold coin donation at the door.
Please join us afterwards for light supper and a chat – find out how “down to earth”
archaeologists really are.***



Biographical notes



Dr Jessica Weir is a Research Fellow in the Native Title Research Unit, AIATSIS, and is a human geographer focused on ecological and social issues in Australia. She completed her PhD at The Australian National University on the dialogue between traditional owners and governments in the management of water in the Murray-Darling Basin. Dr Weir is a member of the [Ecological Humanities](#), a group of academics who foster research that traverses the great divides between the sciences and the humanities.

2008 Activities List

Date	Venue	Speaker	Topic
Wednesday August 20	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Jess Weir	Murray River Country: an ecological dialogue with traditional owners
Wednesday September 17	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Colin Groves	The Flores Hobbit
Wednesday October 15	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Rupert Gerritsen	Ship wrecks off the WA coast
AGM Wednesday November 19	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Tony Barham	Tsunami impacts on WA coastal archaeology
Sunday November 23	Crinigans Stone Hut, park on Wanderer Ct, Amaroo, ACT	11am - 3pm	Family fun day to open the new interpretive sign and commemorate the early settlers of Ginninderra.



Call for contributions

We have had a few articles written by CAS members for Old News...have you got something archaeologically interesting to say? An anecdote? A joke!?...contact us at contact@cas.asn.au and send in your contributions. This is your newsletter and it can only be as interesting as you make it!

New signs for ACT heritage places:

Celebration of the Stone Procurement Sign at Girrawah Park, Gamburra St, Ngunnawal.

CAS members turned up in the cool of the afternoon of Friday, 4th July, for the unveiling of the new sign on this important Indigenous site. The sign was the culmination of our project to produce the first signs on Aboriginal archaeological heritage places under an ACT Heritage Grant, in conjunction with the National Trust (ACT).

Dave Johnston worked with us to consult with the four Registered Aboriginal Organisations in the ACT. Thanks to Dave for a great result; all organisations were happy with the final wording and were very pleased to see one of their sites commemorated.

This metamorphosed tuff procurement site was discovered by archaeological surveys in 1990. There are two outcrops of this stone that showed evidence of Aboriginal quarrying in this area, the other in a park in Nicholls. Originally the sites were recorded using Percival Hill as the base, giving us PH 12 and PH 13. Unluckily PH 13 was the one damaged, but the final outcome is good.

Girrawah means goanna in the local language; the name was chosen by the Ngunnawal people back in 1992 when the site was disturbed by the developer and then rescued into public open space. It was the traditional owners' wish to have a playground next to the site so that people could come and learn about Aboriginal use of the area in the past. Viewers will also realise that the Aboriginal people are still here and proud of this site.

Take the family out to see the *girrawah* himself, represented by a concrete play sculpture and the murals on the wall which depict some of the local dreamings.

Our header photo shows proud members behind the sign: From the right - Helen Cooke, Pres; Sue Ayles, Sec; Marilyn Folger, Crinigan's descendant; Trish Saunders; Peter Dowling and Peter White.



South Coast Field Trip 14 - 15 June 2008 - Report by a New CAS Member

Was it Indiana Jones or Dirt Detective or was it that 1970's award winning TV show on the Talgai Skull seen in my childhood that ignited an interest in archaeology - whatever it was it has taken a lifetime to actually do more than be a documentary couch potato hungrily watching all those Battlefield Detective episodes and actually go and join an Archaeology Society.

Not working in the heritage field, being a transport specialist, I approached my first meeting with some trepidation wondering if the real archaeologists would think I was just a Time Team tragic wanting to dig up some paddock with backhoes or go treasure hunting with metal detectors.

Well the first meeting wasn't so bad and the other people in the audience seemed welcoming and friendly so I decided to sign up for the South Coast Field Trip advertised in Old News. Now imagine my dilemma - what on earth does one take on a field trip apart from lots of photos - did I need a trowel, gum boots, safety vest, surveyors rod, shovel, geophysical measuring equipment or could I get away with a sunglasses, warm jacket, bottle of red wine and a cut lunch? Not one to be daunted I packed everything I could think of into one huge suitcase, loaded down the trusty Commodore and headed off down the Coast to ANU's Kioloa Coastal Studies facility.

In a howling gale I met the other participants who all seemed to know what they were doing - we sheltered in the lee of a hut and a very knowledgeable looking gentleman, Peter White gave us a map and some notes outlining the 15 or more sites we would visit in two days. Well that was my first real eye opener, to find a landscape with a rich and multi layered heritage from Aboriginal middens at Murrumurang and Warden Head to remnants of timber mills deep in the forests behind Kioloa to the visible remains of coastal shipping loading facilities at Bawley Point - not to mention the boiler from HMAS Australia long forgotten and quietly rusting away at Dolphin Point.

Like most Canberrans I had been going to the coast for years, swimming, fishing and enjoying a scenic part of our vast coastline without ever realising the extent of former activity. Evidence of indigenous life and early settlers entrepreneurial spirit is rapidly being taken back into the soil and one day may not be evident at all - apart from Murrumurang Aboriginal site none had signage or any interpretative material to highlight the widespread industrial activity along our part of the coast. To many a former horse drawn rail line or a rotting wooden bridge support in an estuary or iron posts sticking out of the rock are just an incredible nuisance and interfere with fishing, boating or surfing but to me they are as exciting and valuable as a medieval castle or a pyramid or a roman villa - they are our heritage telling the story of our landscape. Hmmm, how do we ensure these sites become important to us - but that's a story for another day.

By the time the weekend was over I found that I had used about 10% of what was packed in my suitcase, had met some extremely interesting and knowledgeable people, enjoyed some good food and even better red wine. Most of all I gained a much better understanding of the coastal landscape and the range of indigenous and industrial activity, the enterprise and optimism of earlier settlers "hidden" along this stretch of coast.

It was cold and windy, there were magnificent boisterous seas but I came home really buoyed up with the knowledge and fun I had enjoyed on this trip. Time Team eat your heart out and CAS when's the next trip!

(Faye Powell)



Bawley Point remains of timber industry; left by Faye Powell, right by Sue Aylen

Ad Space

Do you have anything archaeological to advertise? If you know of, or are running field-work this year and you need volunteers, or you want to volunteer yourself, then contact us at contact@cas.asn.au and we can advertise it for you in Old News or on the mailing list. Websites and archaeology-related events are also welcome!

Joke O' the Weak

What did the skeleton say to the barman?

Give me two beers and a mop, please.

What do you call a very, very old joke?

Pre-hysterical.

Who invented the pen?

The Inkas.

In the (Old) News

Early Aussie Tattoos Match Rock Art

Jennifer Viegas, Discovery News



Cultural Clue

A coiled snake is etched onto a person's body through a process called scarification. Evidence for scarification among indigenous Australians is primarily via (19th century) anthropologist A.C. Haddon who took black and white photographs of some designs, as well as drawing others into his notebooks in the late 1800's.

July 3, 2008 -- Body art was all the rage in early Australia, as it was in many other parts of the ancient world, and now a new study reports that elaborate and distinctive designs on the skin of indigenous Aussies repeated characters and motifs found on [rock art](#) and all sorts of portable objects, ranging from toys to pipes.

The study not only illustrates the link between body art, such as [tattoos](#) and intentional scarring, with cultural identity, but it also suggests that study of this imagery may help to unravel mysteries about where certain groups traveled in the past, what their values and rituals were, and how they related to other cultures.

"Distinctive design conventions can be considered markers of social interaction so, in a way (they are) a cultural signature of sorts that archaeologists can use to understand ways people were interacting in the past," author Liam Brady of Monash University's Center for Australian Indigenous Studies, told Discovery News.



For the study, published in the latest issue of the journal *Antiquity*, Brady documented [rock art drawings](#); images found on early turtle shell, stone and wood objects, such as bamboo tobacco pipes and drums; and images that were etched onto the human body through a process called scarification.

"In a way, a scarred design could be interpreted as a tattoo," Brady said. "It was definitely a distinctive form of body ornamentation and it was permanent since the design was cut into the skin."

"Evidence for scarification is primarily via (19th century) anthropologists -- mainly A.C. Haddon -- who took black and white photographs of some designs, as well as drawing others into his notebooks in the late 1800's," he added.

Both Haddon and Brady focused their attention on a region called the Torres Strait. This is a collection of islands in tropical far northeastern Queensland. The islands lie between Australia and the Melanesian island of New Guinea.

Although people were living in the Torres Strait as early as 9,000 years ago, when sea levels were lower and a land bridge connected Australia with New Guinea, archaeological exploration of the area only really began with Haddon's 19th century work. Since body art, rock art, wooden objects and other tangible items have a relatively short shelf life, Haddon's collections and data represent some of the earliest confirmed findings for the region.

Brady determined that within the body art, rock art and objects, four primary motifs often repeated: a fish headdress, a snake, a four-pointed star, and triangle variants. The fish headdress, usually made of a turtle shell decorated with feathers and rattles, was worn during ceremonies and has, in at least one instance, been linked to a "cult of the dead."

The triangular designs, on the other hand, were often scarred onto women's skin and likely indicated these individuals were in mourning.

Analysis of the materials found that two basic groups -- horticulturalists and hunter-gatherers -- inhabited the [Torres Strait](#) during its early history. Aboriginal people at Cape York, a peninsula close to Australia, had "a different artistic system in operation, which did not incorporate many designs from Papua New Guinea," Brady said.

Based on land locations where the body art and object imagery were found, as well as the nature of the designs, Brady concludes that the Cape York residents were the hunter-gatherers, while groups in more northerly locations within Torres Strait appear to have been horticulturalists. Since imagery mixed and matched more among the early farmers, Brady concludes they enjoyed kinship links, and engaged in extensive trade, with Papua New Guinea groups.

In the future, similar studies could help to identify cultural groups in other regions, while also revealing their social interactions. Such studies could prove particularly useful for other parts of Australia and New Zealand, where tattooing and body art, as well as totems -- protection entities often depicted with colorful imagery -- were common.

Recently, for example, the Field Museum in Chicago returned the human remains of 14 Maori native New Zealanders back to their country of origin. The remains are now at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa.

Included in the collection of mandibles, crania and other bones is "one preserved head with facial tattoos," according to a Field Museum announcement.

In an act of repatriation, nine tattooed Maori heads were also recently gifted to Te Papa by Scotland's Aberdeen Museum.



Te Taru White, a Maori specialist at Te Papa, said the "ancestors" made "the long journey home to New Zealand and to their people."

The heads are now in a consecrated, sacred space within the New Zealand museum, where they may be studied and researched further. In Brady's case, his work was undertaken as part of collaborative research projects initiated by certain Torres Strait and Aboriginal communities.



Book worms

LEFT COAST PRESS SUMMER BOOK SALE!

30% OFF all World Archaeological Congress series, including new and forthcoming titles!

30% OFF other selected archaeology titles from Left Coast Press!

15% OFF everything else!

Visit http://www.lcoastpress.com/books_special.php,

The quai Branly museum has transcribed and translated the international symposium on human remains repatriation issues held on the 22nd and 23rd of February 2008 in Paris. See on the museum's website the original version (in French, English and Maori) and the integral French version of this symposium.

<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/fr/programmation/manifestations-scientifiques/manifestations-passees/symposium-international-des-collections-anatomiques-aux-objets-de-culte-conservation-et-exposition-des-restes-humains-dans-les-musees/index.html>

<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/programmation/scientific-events/past-events/international-symposium-from-anatomic-collections-to-objects-of-worship/index.html>

Cambridge Journals Online. The following issue is now available online:
International Journal of Cultural Property
Volume 15 - Issue 02 - May 2008
Cambridge Journals <http://journals.cambridge.org>

Internet Archaeology is pleased to announce the publication of Issue 24, a themed issue dedicated to:
"Dealing with Legacy Data" edited by Pim Allison

<http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue24/index.html>



Conferences

Australian Archaeological Association Conference

Noosa, Queensland. December 2008

The provisional list of session proposals has been posted on the AAA conference website, and can be accessed at:

<http://www.socialscience.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=84360&pid=74856>

AIMA/AHSA/AAMH Conference

Adelaide, South Australia. September 2008.

Archaeology from Below: Engaging the Public

Adelaide, South Australia — September 24–27, 2008

Venue: State Library of South Australia

Join us this year in Adelaide, South Australia, for the AIMA/ASHA/AAMH annual archaeology conference. We borrowed this year's conference theme from the 1960s movement "History from Below." That movement saw historians shift their focus from topics such as great men, big wars and political elites to subjects that previously had been neglected like women, children, urban and rural poor, immigrants and ethnic minorities. "History from Below" was also about engaging public interest in local histories and encouraging the public to take control of their own personal and community histories.

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

The deadline for paper and poster abstracts has been extended to August 15th.

Please submit your abstract to <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/conferences/archaeology/index.html>.

Please use the online form to submit paper and poster proposals. Paper and poster proposals should be no more than **150 words**. Papers will be either 15 or 20 minutes long depending on the number of papers proposed.

Workshops are open for registration through the workshop organisers. See the conference website for more information: <http://www.aima.iinet.net.au/frames/aimavtframe.html>

Legacies 09' - University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba QLD, February 13-14, 2009.
Public Memory Research Centre Conference 2009 - Call for papers Abstracts (300 words)
or Conference enquiries to legacies09@usq.edu.au . SUBMISSIONS CLOSE 30 SEPTEMBER 2008. <http://www.usq.edu.au/legacies09/default.htm>