

February 2008

old news

The Canberra Archaeological Society Newsletter

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2007 Public Lecture Series

Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6
7:30pm Wednesday 20 February

Welcome to the first edition of Old News for 2008. Our first public lecture promises to be most entertaining and should produce some interesting discussion with our speaker.

Doing Archaeology in a Pacific Paradise: Fieldwork in Vanuatu

Professor Matthew Spriggs GSM (Vanuatu), FSA, FAHA
will give the next session in his annual serial - an overview of archaeological
fieldwork undertaken with Dr Stuart Bradford in Vanuatu as part of an ARC-
funded project

“Northern Vanuatu as a Pacific Crossroads:

The archaeology of discovery, interaction and the emergence of the ethnographic
present”.

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.*



The Teouma excavation team in 2006.

New Committee for 2008

At the Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Archaeological Society Inc held on Wednesday 14 November 2007 new members were elected to the committee.

Come along on February 20 and meet us.

CAS 2007 Committee Contact Details	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	President: Helen Cooke - the.cookies@bigpond.com mobile: 0408 443 243
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vice President: Bob Legge
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Treasurer: Katarina Boljkovac - boljkatica@hotmail.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Secretary: Sue Aylen – sueaylen@dodo.com.au
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Membership Secretary: Vacant – any takers?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Committee Member Kyle Turner, Tegan Kelly
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter Editors: Vacant – any takers?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Web Master: Russell Kightley Media



Ratification of Auditor's Report

At a Special General Meeting held on Wednesday December 5th at the Canberra Yacht Club the attendees with the submitted proxy votes ratified the Auditor's report for the last Financial year. Thankyou to all who provided proxy votes to make this possible. A most enjoyable dinner was enjoyed by the assembled group.

Annual Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2008 are due. If you have not paid yours, please take the opportunity to renew at our first meeting.

ACT Heritage Store Update

For those not already aware of the ACT Heritage Store project, sorting through the heritage items in the store in Lyneham is complete. The inventory and gathering of any historical background, linking it to reports and files and advising on future storage and conservation is well on the way.

All the materials in the store have been rebagged and reboxed for better conservation. Many thanks to those who were able to help through this project.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE 2008@ ANU 4-6 FEBRUARY 2008, THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, CANBERRA

The Centre for Archaeological Research, with funding from the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, CASS, will be holding a three-day conference showcasing the work of ANU scholars and their collaborators in the area of archaeological science to celebrate and launch the new Masters in Archaeological Science (M.Arch.Sci.) Program.

This conference will showcase the work of ANU scholars and collaborating institutions and scientists. Over three days research studies will show how present social and economic challenges benefit from the combined "perspective" provided by the archaeological and geological past. This interplay - of past events providing lessons for the present human condition - is a unique theme in Archaeological Science.

Themes will include:

- Rates of climate change and the intensity of Extreme Natural Events during the recent human past, and the effects of these processes on human life
- The effects of human activities in changing the nature and stability of past ecosystems as people moved into previously unoccupied landscapes and seascapes - such as Pacific Islands
- Calibrating modern "risk" eg. from storm surges and tsunamis using evidence left by past coastal human populations who resided on shorelines prone to catastrophic impacts
- Understanding human migration processes, and what may stimulate migrations

For more information and to Register visit:

<http://arts.anu.edu.au/AandA/archaeology/conference.asp>



 I have heard that Australia is sometimes used as a conduit for the laundering of antiquities because our dealers aren't regulated and there is a lack of a federal police arts and antiquities squad of the sort you find in other countries. Do you know if there is any truth in this? I have to say when I look at the catalogues of auction houses here there is an appalling lack of provenance included.

If anyone can shed any light on this, could they please contact Robert directly on RBevan@afrc.com.au.

The project "Benchmarking Archaeology Degrees in Australian Universities" has reached the end of its first stage. The aim of the project is to make explicit the general nature and level of student learning outcomes for Archaeology graduates and this process has involved all the university providers of Archaeology degrees in Australia.

See: <http://www.atsis.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=75038>

The document available at the above url is a draft of the Archaeology Benchmark, which will be finalised in 2008. The document is written from an academic perspective and represents a consensus view. We invite you to comment on this draft, especially on the Benchmark statements.

Please email your comments and feedback to the Project Officer, Catherine Clarke: cclarke@une.edu.au by February 15, 2008.

Vladimir I. Ionesov is going to publish the international collection of students' articles on theme "Cross-Cultural Education in Changing World". He is interested to have some articles from students in Australia in this collection. If you know anyone who wishes to make a contribution to this book please ask them to contact him directly.

His details are: Dr. Vladimir I. Ionesov
 Chairman, Samara International Society for Cultural Studies,
 PO Box 3004, RU - 443099 Samara Russia Tel./Fax: 7 846 279 00 27
 E-mail: ionesov@mail.ru

3rd Southern Deserts Conference Climate change and the peopling of the Southern Deserts

Molopo Lodge, Kalahari Desert, Southern Africa 16th-19th September 2008

We warmly invite you to the 3rd Southern Deserts Conference: Climate Change and the peopling of the southern deserts in the Kalahari desert, South Africa

<http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/news/events/3sdc/>

This is the 3rd and final conference in the Southern Deserts series and will bring together experts in the field on the Atacama and Puna of South America; the Australian deserts and the Kalahari, Namib and Karoo of Southern Africa.

Conference themes:

Southern desert science: a history of ideas.
 Environmental responses to global Quaternary changes

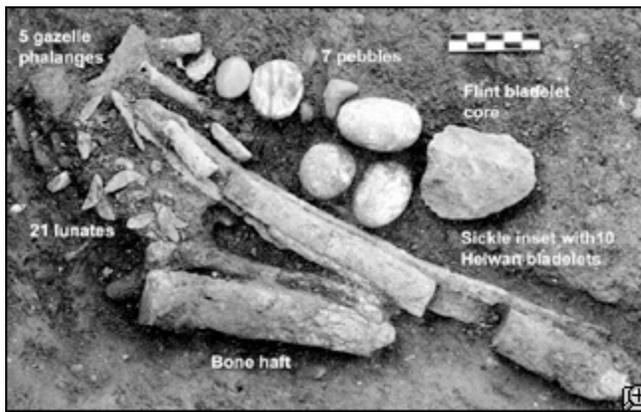


Evolution of southern desert environments
 The peopling of the deserts and the development of desert societies
 Southern desert futures

Persons interested in attending the conference should fill in the Conference reply form available at <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/news/events/3sdc/>

and return it as an email attachment to: kalahari@ouce.ox.ac.uk Preferably prior to the 31st January 2008 (as places are limited)

Ancient Toolkit Gives Glimpse of Prehistoric Life



Toolkit Contents

Dec. 13, 2007 -- Before the end of the last ice age, a hunter-gatherer left a bag of tools near the wall of a roundhouse residence, where archaeologists have now found the collection 14,000 years later.

The tool set -- one of the most complete and well preserved of its kind -- provides an intriguing glimpse of the daily life of a prehistoric hunter-gatherer.

The contents, as described to Discovery News by Phillip Edwards, a senior lecturer in the Archaeology Program at Melbourne's La Trobe University, show the owner of the bag was well equipped for obtaining meat and edible plants in the wild.

"There was a sickle for harvesting wild wheat or barley, a cluster of flint spearheads, a flint core for making more spearheads, some smooth stones (maybe slingshots), a large stone (maybe for striking flint pieces off the flint core), a cluster of gazelle toe bones which were used to make beads, and part of a second bone tool," he said.

Edwards outlines the finds, attributed to the [Natufian](#) culture from a site called Wadi Hammeh 27 in Jordan, in the latest issue of *Antiquity*

He believes the tools were enclosed in a hide or wickerwork bag with a strap that would have been worn over the shoulder. Such bags rarely had compartments, so the owner probably protected valuable items by wrapping them in rolls of bark or leather before placing them at the bottom of the bag.

The sickle, constructed out of two carefully grooved horn pieces, was fitted with color-matched tan and grey bladelets. It would have been a marvel of form and function for its day and is the only tool of its kind ever linked to the Natufian people.

The rest of the items were designed to immobilize and then kill game such as aurochs, red deer, hares, storks, partridges, owls, tortoises and the major source of meat -- gazelles.

"A lone hunter or a group of hunters might wait for gazelles to cross their path while waiting behind a low 'hide' made of twigs and brush," Edwards explained.

"They might have worked on making bone beads to wile away the time. Then a hunter could get off a shot while the animals were off their guard. A first shot might wound, but not kill, and then a hunter or a group of them will track the wounded animal."



He added, "We don't know if Natufian hunters had the bow and arrow, or just spears."

The mountain gazelles targeted by the Near Eastern hunters probably weighed between 39 and 55 pounds, so a strong adult "could carry an entire carcass over his shoulders without much trouble."

But the bag's owner wasn't necessarily a man; women are thought to have been in charge of plant gathering. The tools, therefore, either belonged to a woman hunter-gatherer, or work activities were more gender-blind than thought during prehistoric times, Edwards theorized.

Francois Valla, director of the [French Research Center](#) in Jerusalem and a noted archaeologist, told Discovery News that similar ancient clusters of tools have been excavated, but this latest one is "the most spectacular of them all."

"The clustering of these items is due to a decision made by some Natufian individual," Valla said. "As such, it is a rare testimony of the behavior of a person 14,000 years ago."

The toolkit's showpiece item, its double-bladed sickle, is now on display in the museum of the Faculty of Archaeology & Anthropology at Jordan's Yarmouk University.

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2007/12/13/ancient-toolkit.html?dcitc=w19-502-ak-0000>

Dear Colleagues

The Session Chairs are now seeking papers for the **Session: Archaeology and Climate Change [WAC]**
Theme: Engaged and Useful Archaeologies]

Climate change is shaping up to be one of the largest research and policy issues of our time. While the rate and extent of human contributions to global warming may remain a matter of study and debate for some time to come, current evidence suggests that we need to assess the world-wide impacts of rapid climate change and develop effective responses to it now and in the near future.

The questions at hand are: what can archaeology contribute to efforts to meet this challenge? And, by what means can it best make such contributions?

It is generally recognized that archaeology is one of the few or only means of identifying the speed and flexibility of past human adjustments and adaptations to environmental and climatic fluctuations. But what does this mean with respect to modern climate change?

- How can the tools of archaeology including but not limited to paleoenvironmental reconstruction, land-use analysis, models of social change and information transfer, and ethnoarchaeology - be used to derive ideas and recommendations that are relevant to other ongoing efforts to address climate change and global warming?
- What do we already know about human responses to changing climates?
- What do we want to know?
- Are new tools and models needed?
- Once developed, what are the most useful formats and channels for communicating this archaeological information?

This session will bring together technical, practical, and theoretical expertise to further develop useful and environmentally engaged archaeology.

Please submit your proposal for a paper on line at <http://www.ucd.ie/wac-6/> click on the submit proposal tab. Please make sure that you indicate the session **Archaeology and Climate Change** in the appropriate box.

Should you need to discuss your proposal with the session convenors please do not hesitate to contact:

Marcy Rockman, marcyrockman@hotmail.com

Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy susan.mcintyretamwoy@jcu.edu.au



CAS meetings for 2008:

Date	Time	Venue	Speaker	Topic
February 20	7.30pm	*MCC T6	Matthew Spriggs	Fieldwork in Vanuatu
March 19	7.30pm	*MCC T6	Tony Barham	Regolith, stratigraphy, geoarchaeology issues and the Quaternary deposits of the ACT
April 16	7.30pm	*MCC T6	Jean Kennedy	Prehistoric bananas
May 21	TBA	Coombs Lecture Theatre	Peter Hiscock	National Archaeology Week - Hollywood and archaeology
June 18	7.30pm	*MCC T6	Ian Gilligan	Clothing in Aboriginal Australia
July 16	7.30pm	TBA	TBA	
August 20	7.30pm	TBA	Jess Weir	Murray River Country: an ecological dialogue with traditional owners
September 17	7.30pm	TBA	TBA	
October 15	7.30pm	TBA	TBA	
November 19	7.30pm	TBA	AGM - Tony Barham	Geoarchaeological approaches to looking at Tsunami impacts on WA coastal archaeology –

*Manning Clarke Centre Theatre 6



Canberra Skeptics

Boffins vs wolverines: science and the media

Speaker: Julian Cribb

On Wednesday, 13 February 2008

Time: 6:00 *p.m.*

Place: Visions Theatre, National Museum of Australia, Acton Peninsula

Free admission

The media is the means by which 90 per cent of people in an advanced society get 100 per cent of their science. It influences all our major decisions about technology and future courses of action. Yet so often the media appears to get the science wrong. Julian Cribb has worked both on sides of the tracks, with 30 years as journalist and editor and over a decade as science communicator. He takes a sceptical look at both science and the media.

Julian Cribb is Adjunct Professor of Science Communication at the University of Technology Sydney. He was science editor for *The Australian* and Director of National Awareness for CSIRO. He now helps science organisations to explain themselves.

For enquiries please contact Michael O'Rourke by phone, (02) 6121 4483, during business hours.

<http://finch.customer.netSPACE.net.au/skeptics/>