

EDITORIAL

The launching of a new journal, particularly in a new field, is an important moment. In this case it marks the 'coming-of-age' of Australian historical archaeology. For long the poor, adopted waif of Australian prehistoric archaeologists, it now seems that Australian historical archaeology has a far more promising future than some would once have thought. With Australia's bicentennial year of 1988 just around the corner this is as it should be.

The 'knockers' will question, of course, whether this *particular* moment is really a good time to set out on such a new venture. After all, publication is expensive and there are so many journals already. In addition, the apparently failing interest of Australian society in matters of scholarship and higher education, means that at the moment even university libraries are cutting back on their purchases of journals in order to save money. In the face of such difficulties it would be easy to take the safe way out and do nothing. The plain fact is, however, that there has never been a journal of Australian historical archaeology and those of us who research into or teach this subject, or try to extend public interest in the Australian heritage, feel that we need one. There is an increasing volume of historical archaeological work being done in Australia and we need to provide improved facilities for its publication.

This new journal will appear once a year, if the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology, which is financing it, continues to be able to afford this. It is, in the strict academic sense of the phrase, a 'refereed journal' but it is the intention of the present editor that it should interest and stimulate a far wider reading public than merely a few academics. Properly presented, the material culture of the 200 years of Australia's colonial settlement is a fascinating subject for the general public and it is to be hoped that authors writing for this journal will strive to reach that wider readership.

It is also the editor's intention that this journal should attempt to attract a very wide selection of historical archaeological writings from throughout all parts of Australia and also at times from overseas: it is for the latter reason that this journal is called *The Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*, not *The Journal of Australian Historical Archaeology*. The editor hopes that colleagues in New Zealand, in America, in Europe or in South-East Asia, will send him papers that either in content or in theoretical or methodological approach might have relevance to our Australian endeavours. The editor also hopes that they will buy and read this journal!

In this first volume there is a wide selection of papers. Judy Birmingham and Denis Jeans have written an important theoretical paper, at a time when we sorely need to think critically about what we are trying to do. The editor has followed this with a theory and policy paper of his own, examining in the process some of his own past and present efforts. There is then a brave attempt by Jane Wesson to present us with a 'first bibliography' of Australian historical archaeology. There will be readers who may wonder at such bravado but it has hitherto been very difficult for the new student of this subject, whether engaged in formal study or just

pursuing a personal interest, to know just where to start in the task of looking for reading material. This bibliography will certainly help in this direction and we invite readers to fill in the gaps that they will inevitably find. The next paper, by Edward Higginbotham, discusses his excavation of an early drain in Parramatta, and provides something of an answer to those who (with some justice) are now claiming that in Australian historical archaeology field survey is more urgent than excavation. Following that paper is one by Michael Pearson, that examines the technology of 19th century whaling and gives us a sound background against which to interpret the archaeological evidence of that industry. He is followed by Peter Coutts, who in the first of two papers seeks to build up a data base for various aspects of New Zealand historical archaeology, in this case concerning himself with the building industry. The next paper is by Luke Godwin and describes and discusses McCrossin's Mill at Uralla, showing how the material evidence neatly complements the historical and oral traditional record. The last paper is that of Kate Holmes, discussing her excavations at the mining settlement of White Range at Arltunga in the Northern Territory: excavations that throw light on the lifestyle of a small, remote mining settlement at the beginning of the present century.

The editor wishes to conclude this editorial with an acknowledgement of the very considerable help that he has had from many sources. He would particularly like to thank Judy Birmingham for giving him the chance to edit this new journal. He is also particularly indebted to Ilma Powell and Rosemary Annable, of the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology, for much practical help; to Beryl Connah, his wife, for many hours of typescript checking; to Mrs Evelyn McCann of Armidale and Mrs Wendy Chappell of the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of New England, for typing; to Mr Douglas Hobbs of the same Department for skilled drawing-board work on some of the figures. He also wishes to thank the Editorial Committee of the Journal for being so patient whilst he struggled with the task of getting this first volume together and, of course, he must thank the contributors who showed such remarkable self-control when faced by so many red-inked questions and comments. Last but not least, he would like to acknowledge the receipt of a contribution to the cost of producing this journal, from the Royal Australian Historical Society. To make this contribution that Society has drawn on funds made available by the Government of New South Wales, on the recommendation of the Cultural Grants Advisory Council, for work in regional history.

Graham Connah,
Department of Prehistory and Archaeology,
University of New England,
ARMIDALE.
N.S.W. 2351

19 October 1982.