

# Editorial

The twentieth *Australasian Historical Archaeology* has arrived! At times, in the early 1990s, it seemed that the 'ASHA Journal' would not survive the departure of its founding editor Graham Connah, but it carried on with a number of guest editors and now the current editorial team. Twenty annual issues constitutes a substantial body of work and it seems an appropriate time to celebrate the achievements of *AHA*.

For this special issue, we've harked back to the burgundy cover of the first edition, but avoided the traditional approach of numerous retrospectives by sage members of the discipline. Rather, we have sought to balance the reflections of the foundations of our field, with an assembly of papers that look to the future of historical archaeology in Australasia. The backward glances to the formation of the journal (Connah), theory-building (Murray), the discourses that gave rise to historical archaeology in Australia (Ireland), catalogues (Crook, Lawrence & Gibb) and archaeological zoning plans (Iacono) are all cast with a view to understanding our present situation and moving forward. The remaining papers, presenting the results of research on archaeological sites and assemblages, demonstrate the fresh approaches being taken to formerly overlooked material culture (Harrison, Hayes), the domestic dimensions of industrial archaeology (Davies), international comparisons of archaeological assemblages (Brooks), tourism on excavation sites (Grimwade & Ginn), and the layout of a blacksmith's shop (Hyett).

It is also interesting to note that of the articles included in this issue, the majority are resulting from 'academic' work such as doctoral or post-doctoral research, or the results of special academic projects. This differs from most journal issues in which articles have been the result of projects generated from CRM archaeological or heritage studies—a situation which ironically is a focal point of some 'academic' papers in this volume. This marks a welcome development for Australasian historical archaeology and suggests a returning balance between academic research and the consulting-based archaeological investigations.

While consulting and public archaeology provides the bulk of funding for historical archaeology, such projects are tightly focused on meeting the needs of the development program. Academic exploration permits broader and diverse research programs (as shown in the recent numbers of completed dissertations; see Murray) but the ability to do long-term research has been hindered by the increasing under-funding of the University system. Several of the papers (e.g. Murray; Crook, Lawrence & Gibb; and Iacono) demonstrate the benefits of collaboration between the two spheres in pushing forward the theory and practice of historical archaeology.

To kick off Volume 20, we invited Emeritus Professor Graham Connah to comment on the journal's foundation and progress over the past two decades of 'hunting', as much as publishing, papers. Apart from being the first journal editor, Graham is well known for his views on the need for thorough publication of all archaeological projects.

Professor Tim Murray, in his first paper in *AHA*, reflects on the advancement of Australian historical archaeology since 1986 when he and Jim Allen assessed the role of theory in the then burgeoning field. Murray finds that while the situation today has improved in some aspects, archaeological (and particularly post-excavation) research is undervalued and many aspects of CRM current practice, particularly excavation research designs, are rarely evaluated. With the bulk of archaeological activities being undertaken in CRM, research

designs have become a surrogate and unsatisfying platform for theory-building. Murray proposes that the way forward lies in the systematic evaluation of research designs and other common procedures, a *re-valuing* of the importance of rigorous and comprehensive research and dissolution of the rigid distinctions between academic and heritage sectors.

Dr Tracy Ireland explores the values attributed to the history and material culture of Australia in the late-twentieth century when historical archaeology emerged as a recognisable methodology of historical enquiry. In this engaging paper, Ireland tracks the first debates about the protection of Aboriginal sites in 1950s, the traditions of environmental concern, the practices of local, settler-history collecting and the amateur collection of Aboriginal artefacts, and draws them as the complex foreground of the development of heritage and historical archaeology. With personal accounts from some of the first Australian historical archaeologists, Ireland argues that the initiatives to protect Australia's national heritage places and things in the late-twentieth century was not a 'maturation' of the nation or a search for a national identity—that was already well established and unquestioned. Rather, it was the result of a new appreciation that that treasured identity would be best expressed and celebrated in surviving material culture, and the study—particularly *scientific* study—of that material culture.

Penny Crook, Dr Susan Lawrence and Dr Martin Gibbs provide a thoughtful paper on the role of artefact catalogues in excavations. They see the lack of adequate cataloguing of artefact collections as a major barrier to making comparisons between sites and thus making the task of understanding the past much more difficult. The authors argue that the primary aim of a catalogue is to facilitate the holistic analysis and interpretation of a site assemblage and argue for the need to establish standardised procedures and methodologies. This is a thought-provoking paper which the authors hope will prompt active debate on the subject.

Nadia Iacono provides a welcome review of one of the important tools of archaeological management—archaeological zoning plans—from their first use in the early 1980s to the recent developments of 'over-the-counter' permits. She raises the problems of the 'eleventh-hour' approach to managing archaeological resources, and the challenges of archaeologists generating systems and documents that planners must be able to implement efficiently and effectively. While they are the subjects of ongoing doctoral research, Iacono sets forth some practical suggestions for better integrating the management of archaeological sites within the planning system.

Dr Alasdair Brooks brings his experience of working in Britain, the USA and now Australia to the study of ceramics. He explains how the comparative analysis of ceramic assemblages can be developed in order to examine the material relationships between British, New Zealand and Australian archaeological records. Brooks also warns of the need to cautiously evaluate models developed to analyse American ceramic assemblages before they are applied in other situations.

Taking a new direction in studies on saw milling, Dr Peter Davies raises the issue of domestic consumption on Victorian saw mills. Drawing on excavations at the Henry Mill, he illustrates the process of domestic consumption and how single men and families made a life in these small isolated communities. This paper makes a welcome change from the preoccupation with steam engines that form the focus of most studies on saw mills!

In a pioneering study on post-contact Aboriginal material

culture, Rodney Harrison looks at the creation of metal artefacts found on an Aboriginal pastoral workers' encampments in the Kimberley. This study attempts not only a general description of the artefacts but points to the symbolic role of such artefacts in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. Harrison also points to the issues involved in ascribing values such as 'Aboriginality' to modern material culture altered to approximate traditional artefact forms and 'non-Aboriginal' to unmodified items.

Lincoln Hayes explores a new dimension to Australian historical archaeology that is the archaeology of South Sea Islanders. By using archaeology and related disciplines Hayes explores how the descendants of Melanesian indentured servants flourished and carved out for themselves a unique and substantial cultural identity as Australian South Sea Islanders. He then argues for the need to protect places of significance to the Australian South Sea Islander community.

Gordon Grimwade and Geoff Ginn present an overview of the archaeological work on Green Hill Fort on Thursday Island. While this is of interest in itself, Grimwade and Ginn argue strongly that the project is a good example of tourism and archaeology working together and that presenting the Fort and archaeology to the public is just as important a form of 'publishing' as preparing papers for academic journals. By broadening the focus of archaeology away from what they see as an academic approach of publish or perish, archaeology is

made more relevant to the general public.

With John Hyett's paper we are introducing a new idea of short reports for the Journal. The aim of these is to encourage the publishing of shorter reports on specific sites and we anticipate that many of these may be derived as is Hyett's, from honours theses or from consulting reports. Blacksmiths' shops are such a ubiquitous part of rural Australia and the world that it is surprising that little archaeological work has been undertaken on them. Hyett presents a recording of the blacksmith's shop at Strathbogie, discusses the limited amount of archaeological work undertaken on these sites.

To top off Volume 20, Beryl Connah has meticulously prepared a much-needed index for issues 1-19 of *AHA*.

We are grateful to all the authors for their contributions, and to the referees who often provided comments at short notice to meet production deadlines. Thanks also to Anne Mackay for her proof-reading talents.

Finally some of you may know that due to the pressures of work, Iain will not be continuing as Editor of *AHA*, and Penny will be taking a less active role.

We welcome Mary Casey as the new Editor of *AHA* and wish her all the best for Volume 21 and beyond.

*Iain Stuart and Penny Crook*