

President's Foreword

JUDY BIRMINGHAM has been an enormous influence in historical archaeology in Australia, and nowhere more so than in her involvement with ASHA, so it is fitting that this volume celebrates and honours her contribution. It is likewise fitting to have such a diverse range of topics covered by the contributors. Like many of the pioneers in historical archaeology in Australia, Judy's background, research and influence extended well beyond this region.

Judy came to the University of Sydney from St Andrews and the Institute of Archaeology in London in 1961 to take up a post in Near Eastern Archaeology. In her early years in Sydney Judy taught exclusively in that area, while continuing her own research in Iron Age Cyprus and Anatolia. The methodological and theoretical approaches taken in that work were well in advance of their time, and her paper on the ethnoarchaeology of South Asian ceramics continues to be widely cited.

Judy quickly came to realise the need for local fieldwork in order to provide training for her students, and so began her work on the archaeology of colonial Australia. Beginning with Irrawang and Wybalenna, Judy generated enthusiasm for the research potential of Australian sites. Equally importantly, she also worked tirelessly to raise awareness of colonial archaeological sites amongst the general public, and particularly within the emerging field of cultural heritage management. She was influential in the preparations of heritage legislation in New South Wales in the mid-1970s, and participated in the Hope Inquiry into the National Estate in 1973–1974. Following on from that Judy was on the Project Coordination Committee on Historical Archaeology, which was influential in advising the federal government on the formation of what eventually became the Australian Heritage Commission. Together with other archaeologists of that era, including John Mulvaney, Jim Allen and Isabel McBryde, she helped to ensure that there is now a legislative framework for protecting and managing historical archaeological places for future generations.

While policy work helped to conserve sites, in Judy's work as a teacher she helped to train the professional archaeologists who would go on to carry out the vital work of studying and managing historical archaeological heritage. In the context of the work at Irrawang, and Wybalenna, the nascent Australian Society for Historical Archaeology, and the Hope Inquiry into the National Estate, Judy saw the need for a specific undergraduate subject in historical archaeology. With the support of Ian Jack (History) in particular, and with Dennis Jeans (Geography), also university staff and ASHA members, the second year course Historical Archaeology was established in 1974. As a teacher Judy had a gift for enthusing and encouraging her students, no less in historical archaeology than had been the case in Near Eastern archaeology, and as a result many historical archaeologists in Sydney and around Australia can trace their initial inspiration and sound training to her.

Intellectually, Judy has always been at the forefront of research in her chosen field. Following the pattern she established for herself in her earliest fieldwork in the Near East, she has always been eager to push the boundaries of what it is possible to learn from the archaeological record. Judy has been a leader in the intellectual development of historical archaeology in Australia as well as in its practical development. She has introduced a range of new developments and perspectives, in areas as wide ranging as industrial archaeology, Aboriginal historical archaeology, urban archaeology and gender.

Among Judy's many activities, she was one of a group of like-minded individuals who saw the need for an organisation dedicated to promoting historical archaeology in Australia. In 1970 the Australian Society for Historical Archaeology was formed, and Judy took on the responsibility first of secretary, then of president, a position in which she continued for many years. With her close friend and associate Ilma Powell, she played a key role in building the society up and keeping it going. Regular talks, excursions, and the quarterly newsletter encouraged members to carry out research on local sites and enabled them to exchange information of mutual interest. The newsletter became an important venue for the publication of fundamental research into various aspects of colonial archaeology and material culture. Much of this work was carried out by Judy and her students. It is noteworthy that from the earliest days of the society members were actively involved with the National Trust, the Heritage Council of New South Wales, ICOMOS, and with the related disciplines of history, architectural history, geography, and engineering and industrial history. It was this initial breadth of vision that has given ASHA its diversity and its unique multi-disciplinary character. In 1992 the name of the society and its journal was changed from 'Australian' to 'Australasian', in order to reflect and encourage the increasing participation of colleagues in New Zealand, and these changes were welcomed and strongly supported by Judy as both president and editor.

ASHA is a product of Judy's initial vision, enthusiasm, and tenacity. Over the years the Newsletter has been supplemented and extended by the annual journal, edited by Judy herself on several occasions, and a range of research reports and monographs have also been published by the Society. The small Sydney meetings of the early 1970s have expanded to become a major annual conference attended by people from all over Australia and New Zealand, and from overseas. From that initial Sydney base the Society has become truly Australasian in character, which is reflected in the committee membership and in the conferences held at venues around Australia and New Zealand. The multi-disciplinary definition of historical archaeology that was implicit in the affairs of the early society has continued to be a feature, as a new generation of student members carries out research on topics ranging from landscapes, architecture, technology, and cross-cultural contact to modern material culture.

ASHA and its members have become increasingly professional, and historical archaeology is now integral in the programs of most universities teaching archaeology in Australia. Many government heritage agencies now employ historical archaeologists, and historical archaeology is an important part of heritage management, with many of ASHA's members working in that field. While the discipline of historical archaeology has strengthened and consolidated, it has also become more outward-looking. Relations between ASHA and its sibling societies the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology and the Australian Archaeological Association have never been closer, and joint conferences take place on a regular basis. Inasmuch as the Society has played a role in furthering the development of historical archaeology in Australia and New Zealand, that contribution can be attributable to Judy Birmingham and her pioneering work. It is with great pleasure that ASHA dedicates this volume to her.

SUSAN LAWRENCE

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