

THESIS ABSTRACTS

Masters

Secret and Safe: Exploring the archaeology of concealed artefacts from the Ladies' Cottage of an Australian mental asylum

Lauren Bryant: Masters of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Archaeology Department, Flinders University, 2018.

Archaeological studies have largely failed to make use of artefacts to try and understand the experiences of individuals living in mental asylums in the past. This thesis examines a collection of objects from the Ladies' Cottage of Willow Court Asylum in Tasmania, Australia's longest continuously operating mental health facility, in order to consider how artefacts can be used to understand the experiences of individuals from within this institutional context. Looking at artefacts from within this context illuminated the experiences of patients and the role of behaviours including resistance, concealment, and ritual to exercise agency within a controlling and restrictive environment. A collection of ephemeral, fabric, and other artefacts concealed in the asylum reveals that despite the restrictions placed on individuals within the environment of a mental asylum during the mid-20th century, patients were able to exercise control over their own lives within this system through behaviours like the collection, alteration, and concealment of objects. Though the motivation for these behaviours is difficult to interpret because they were the result of mental illness, this analysis demonstrates the value of studying artefacts from a mental asylum context. By including the study of artefacts in archaeological studies of asylums, more can be learned about the experiences of patients within the systems they were living in, and restore a voice to this marginalised group in the past.

Honours

The defence of West Australia Hill, South Africa: An archaeological assessment

John A. Adeney: BA(Hons) thesis, Department of Archaeology and Centre for Rock Art Research and Management, University of Western Australia, 2019.

The defence of West Australia Hill was a day-long encounter between 30 West Australians and 300–400 Boers during the South African War (1899–1902). An archaeological survey using metal detectors and GPS was conducted over the battlefield of 60 hectares to determine why the West Australians were able to maintain tactical superiority throughout the encounter. Firing locations of both the West Australians and the Boers were identified and archaeological evidence of fired cartridges and artillery artefacts collected and combined with archival evidence.

Battlefield Patterning Analysis as pioneered by Scott and Fox on the Custer battlefield, USA was used to assess how effective the use of terrain and fire was by the combatants. The limited number of ammunition finds hindered the application of Battlefield Pattern Analysis but showed that the method has application on 20th-century battlefields.

The concept of Dynamic Patterning, a component of Battlefield Pattern Analysis was developed further by the introduction of two innovative methods of recording ammunition characteristics, off-centeredness of firing pin indentations and marks within firing pin indentations on the primer of the fired cartridges. These methods validated the locations of the combatants during the day-long defence.

The tactical superiority by the West Australians suggested by the written record was confirmed by the on-ground archaeological investigation that good tactical layout on West Australia Hill and fire discipline, aided by British artillery enabled a successful all-day defence to result. An Eastern flanking route used by the Boers was confirmed. These factors thwarted the continual attacks by the Boers throughout the day until abandonment of the position at nightfall with minimal loss of life.

Class and Diet: Determining dietary patterns of populations in Colonial Sydney from sheep (*Ovis aries*) butchery patterns

Natalia McDonald: BSc (Hons) thesis, School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, University of New England, 2018.

Reconstructing historical food and diet preferences is an integral part of understanding resource availability, socioeconomic status and ethnic food preferences through space and time. This study analysed the skeletal element profiles and butchery patterns of 116 fragments of *Ovis aries* (sheep) bone in order to reconstruct the dietary patterns and food preferences of a population in colonial Sydney. These findings were then used in a comparative analysis of faunal assemblages associated with other colonial sites both within the Sydney area and the wider landscape, which ultimately informed the specific meat products being utilised and associated socioeconomic class of the population in and around the study area.

This comparative analysis indicated that mutton, rather than lamb was a dietary staple of those in and around Clarence Street in colonial times, and that low-quality mutton cuts were favoured over the higher quality and more expensive alternatives. It was determined that these meat products predominately formed the basis of low-quality, one pot meals such as stews, soups, pies, shanks and hot pots, and some medium quality dishes such as roasts and stews. Occasionally higher quality mutton cuts were eaten in the form of roasts, chops and baked dishes. This research revealed that the population in and around Clarence Street had good access to food resources, but the availability of these resources was dependant on budget and socioeconomic position. The study assemblage is associated with a low socio economic population such as emancipated convicts and individuals who were employed in low-earning occupations such as labourers, grocers, cooks, dressmakers, shoe or bookmakers or other similar occupations.

The age at death and unusual nature of the study assemblage, particularly the high frequency of cranial elements and the lack of foot bones, indicated that the study assemblage is representative of a combination of domestic, commercial and communal eating environments, and that the sheep within this assemblage were likely utilised for by-products such as wool and glue before and after being slaughtered for meat.

Meat, wool or dairy? Age as a proxy for herd management strategies and socioeconomic importance of sheep (*Ovis aries*) in Colonial Sydney

Tanja Nussbaumer: BA(Hons) thesis, Department of Archaeology, University of New England, 2018.

Australian historical zooarchaeological studies are currently very limited in comparison to those from colonial America and focus primarily on diet and butchery practices. Consequently, this thesis aims to broaden understandings of early colonial Sydney's subsistence and herd management strategies, to determine the socioeconomic role of sheep and reflect British responses to the Australian colonial environment. The faunal assemblage from well 2 at the Clarence Street site (161–165 Clarence Street and 304 Kent Street) Sydney, yielded a total of n=131 sheep mandibles. Of these, n=69 elements from the left side were examined and measured to create age-at-death profiles and sex and butchery determinations. To gain a broader understanding of the archaeological context of colonial Sydney, a comparative analysis of contemporary faunal assemblages was conducted, as well as a review of historical documents.

The results indicated that the citizens around Clarence St. were predominantly consuming mutton; and the butchery marks on the mandibles suggest the brain and tongue, which are both of low nutritional value, were also consumed. Mutton is generally associated with lower socioeconomic classes; therefore, it was concluded that the consumers were likely not of a high status or particularly wealthy. The comparative analysis with faunal assemblages from Cumberland and Gloucester Street, Mountain Street, Pyrmont, Darling Walk and Castlereagh Street likewise revealed that sheep were consistently slaughtered as mature adults, past their prime age for meat. Therefore, this suggests that the sheep economy in colonial Sydney was primarily focused on secondary products; initially wool production (and perhaps dairy), and then meat production. Despite the sex determinations being inconclusive, the possibility of a mix of male and female sheep is also indicative of a wool-producing economy. This contrasts with herding strategies of the 'Parentlands' (i.e. Britain and Ireland), whereby mass meat-production was the primary economy, and therefore speculations were made that traditional sheep herding practices were adapted to new conditions and environments.

Fortress New England? The Second World War Conflict Archaeology of Regional New South Wales Australia

Tim Reid: BA (Hons), Archaeology Department, University of New England, 2018.

Conflict Archaeology traditionally focuses on the material remains of conflict. Contributions by the Defence of Britain and Defence Areas Projects to Conflict Archaeology opened new avenues for exploring the materiality of warfare (Schofield 2004; Foot 2006). This reassessment of modern material culture attempts to address our understanding of contemporary society drawing on methods from a range of academic disciplines. Conflict Archaeology, therefore, incorporates the effects of conflict on the civilian population in 20th-century warfare (e.g. WWI and WWII). Applying Conflict Archaeology to the Australian context reveals a plethora of material that only recently gained acknowledgment as a worthy study area. Developed in Australia through Aviation, Maritime and Historical Archaeologies, the field is °emerging towards methods and applications used in Conflict Archaeology throughout Europe and America.

The Second World War in Australia saw invasion anxiety reach a peak crisis point in 1942. The government attempted to prevent the spread of fear and panic by keeping civilians occupied while privately advocating the removal of children and valuable cultural property inland. Roads, bridges and ferries were strengthened and simultaneously prepared for destruction with road mines being constructed and packed with explosives. Aerodrome sites were also surveyed as part of nation-wide contingency planning to prevent the subjugation of Australia by Imperial Japan. In a bid to control production the federal government dispersed factories throughout Australia to prevent a feared 'knock-out blow' (Holman 2014).

These issues have been rarely studied by contemporary archaeological methods in Australia; those that focus on conflict seldom observe the effects conflict had on the civilian population. While fear has been analysed in the context of frontier wars by Grguric (2008) through loopholed walls, this has not been applied elsewhere in Australia. The World War II landscape of the New England provided few examples of this engagement, moreover, there are no academic studies on World War II material remains for the region. This thesis attempts to bridge this gap of knowledge by mapping the World War II landscape of New England NSW during World War II.