

Editorial

It is basically a cliché at this point to discuss the rigours of 2020 as the year draws to a close. Catastrophic bushfires in Australia in January led to catastrophic floods only a few months later in many places that were only starting to recover from the fires. As this was happening, a global pandemic of unprecedented geographic spread and longevity for the 21st century has fundamentally changed the ways we live, work, and engage with our fellow human beings, professionally as well as socially.

And yet through it all we have been able to assemble a remarkable collection of papers for Volume 38 of AHA. Our sincere thanks go to our incredibly patient authors, over a dozen peer reviewers who worked with us to make sure the articles and research reports were of the highest academic standard, and our book review and thesis abstract editor Peta Longhurst.

The volume begins with a paper by Harold Mytum synthesising current research on the monuments from Parramatta's earliest cemetery, St. John's. The paper is an important contribution to ongoing discussions of the material expressions of a particularly Australian colonial identity that developed over the course of the 19th century. Nadia Bajzelj and Christopher Biagi have offered an analysis of material culture they interpret as relating to the activities of a brothel in a working-class Melbourne neighbourhood, adding richness to our understanding of the functional variability of assemblages from urban landscapes in colonial Australia.

Brendan Marshall offers a detailed account of the development of Geelong's urban core, covering adaptation to and development of the topography of the town. This kind of

study of the establishment of Australia's 'second cities' should be an important topic for further research. John Pickard turns to a rarely used documentary source, cartoons, to question their validity and utility as a reference material for understanding historical archaeological sites and artefacts. Nick Hadnutt and Geraldine Mate round out the articles with a contribution outlining the ways that collections characterisation in the Queensland Museum led to better understanding of the significance of the historical artefacts curated at QM and enhanced partnerships with the organisations that contribute to these collections.

There are two research reports in the volume. Pate *et al.* offer a brief account of the utility of prefabricated concrete crypts for long-term preservation and storage of human remains underground. Matic identifies Australian-built Beaufort aircraft from World War II at the Tadjiri airfield in northwestern Papua New Guinea, expanding understanding of the remnants of wartime experience from the Pacific theatre.

These diverse contributions reflect the vibrancy and variety of Australasian historical archaeology. From discussions about best practices in curation, to expanding the types of documentary sources we use, to identifying and interpreting different elements of urban landscapes, we are encouraged to see that even in challenging circumstances our community continues to produce engaging and innovative scholarship.

*James L. Flexner
Penny Crook
Sarah Hayes
Annie Clarke*