

**ACT Historical Archaeology Workshop 2
Fenced and Forgotten
(History, Heritage and Hackneyed Approaches)**

Notes taken during workshop

Introductions and welcomes by Dr Tracy Ireland, Donald Horne Institute and Helen Cooke, president of the Canberra Archaeology Society

The Molonglo Mystery – Alan Foskett

The Molonglo Mystery was in fact a First World War internment camp in what is now the suburb of Fyshwick. Little known by most Canberrans it was originally built to confine German nationals held in China but ended up holding civilian males, females and children who had connections to Germany. After the camp was closed at the end of the War many of the barrack houses and structures were dismantled and removed. Those that were left were then used for workers who were building Canberra – it became known as the Molonglo Workers Settlement and at one time over 800 people have lived there. Little now remains of the camp other than a dam structure on nearby Radio Hill. When it was being built it was called the Molonglo Mystery by the locals and today remains very much a mystery by today's locals. Allan, however, has made great efforts telling the story of the camp in two publications, many lectures and guided tours.

'The Valley' – Fenced, forgotten and forlorn - Helen Cooke

The Valley homestead, Gungahlin, was built by Thomas Gribble in the 1860s. It went through several additional structures before being abandoned in the mid 1970s. Today it is a ruin, but a valuable reminder of the past rural lifestyles and economies of the district. Although heritage listed with the ACT Government little conservation work has been done on the remaining structures despite a conservation and management plan being done. It is fenced, largely forgotten by the ACT government and certainly forlorn.

Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop – Peter Dowling

The blacksmith shop was first constructed around 1860 and served as a privately owned and managed blacksmith, farrier, Cartwright and wheelwright establishment until it ceased operations in the late 1940s. Like *The Valley* ruin nearby, the blacksmith shop is heritage listed but is still fenced in. The National Trust applied for and received three grants from the government to protect and conserve the building and a preliminary archaeological survey was conducted jointly by the Trust and CAS. A revised conservation and management plan is need for the building with a strong emphasis on future interpretation which would lead to the place being made more accessible to the public.

Rural, Ruin and Reuse: the dilemma – Eric Martin

Eric clearly pointed out that 'Fenced and Forgotten' is not the best solution to our rural heritage. Using examples such as Lanyon which is well protected but costly to maintain; Horse Park homestead which is now protected but is compromised in part because of the loss of its rural setting to residential sites; Elm Grove, recently heritage listed; Tralee homestead complex with its setting compromised by planned development; Gungaharra homestead, heritage protected but its context compromised; Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop, The Valley and other rural sites, Eric discussed the dilemmas of funding, reuse, loss of rural context and setting of buildings, management and adaptive reuse. A further dilemma pointed out was the problem of protection and conservation of a place which has not reached the criteria for heritage listing even though there is a degree of historic importance to the place. Not being heritage listed does not mean that a place should not be saved and reused if it has a historical context.

The importance of the Nolan Gallery – Pam Swafield

Sidney Nolan was one of Australia's most prolific and well known artists. The Nolan Gallery building at Lanyon was purpose built to house a collection of his paintings bequeathed to Australia. The paintings have been removed from the gallery and are now housed in Civic at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. This move has been done without the approval or support of Lady Nolan who has frequently expressed her great disappointment that the paintings have been removed from the rural setting of Lanyon where the artist requested they be housed. Pam Swafield read from the correspondence between Lady Nolan and CMAG ensuing from the move and the conversations and reasoning behind rehousing the paintings. At last check, of the 24 works bequeathed to Australia for housing at the Lanyon gallery only 9 are now showing for public display at CMAG. This presentation received a great deal of comment from the floor.

Adelong Falls Gold Mill Ruins 1870 1909 –

Alluvial gold was discovered at Adelong in 1850 and reef gold in 1856. The existing Reefer Battery built in 1890 was one of the most efficient of its time and operated up to 1914. The Gold Mill ruins are now no longer forgotten. A committee has been created to look after the site and to make recommendations to the local council for its continued protection and to promote the site to the local and wider communities. The committee has also taken on the task of reviewing all associated documents relating to the historic gold workings and the reserve. The committee is also active in raising funds to continue the conservation and management into the future. This is one of the successful stories of conservation which was largely made possible by a dedicated and professional team from the community working with the local council.

Fenced and Forgotten: Captains Flat Cemetery – Elizabeth Estbergs

Captains Flat was surveyed in 1882 as a mining town which initially flourished. In 1962 the mines closed and much of the associated structures and machinery were sold at auction. 190 houses went up for sale. The cemetery is an important element and reminder of this past era. Like many such cemeteries much of the headstones and grave furniture has deteriorated making some plots unidentifiable. Once somewhat forgotten the cemetery is now being studied by Elizabeth's group who have been doing research at the Palerang Council, State records of NSW, Queanbeyan local court, local funeral directors, local historical societies and local history

collections. The group are now well advanced into their research but still have a way to go, and like many groups studying historic cemeteries, they have been encountering the problems associated with different names for the same burial and displaced headstones.

Cultural Heritage and Conservation at the University of Canberra – Tracy Ireland

Tracey Ireland, a senior lecturer at the Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Studies (one of the sponsors for this workshop) outlined the role of this institute which began teaching just this year. Their charter is largely to reinvigorate cultural heritage studies in Canberra and to foster and integrate with other institutions and organizations concerned with cultural heritage. The Cultural course is multidisciplinary drawing on the theory and methods of history, archaeology, anthropology and other cultural and technical studies. It is taught at undergraduate level at this time but will in time lead up to post-graduate studies in each of its streams. The institute is launching a mentoring program with local ICOMOS members in heritage practice to give students a hands-on and wider experience of professional heritage management and assessment.

Rich Pastures. The Archaeology at HQ Joint Operations Command, Dairy Station Creek, between Queanbeyan and Bungendore – Doug Williams

In the process of constructing the HQ Joint Operations Command centre archaeological survey and excavations were conducted. Surface survey revealed a few Indigenous and historic artefact on the surface but subsequent planned excavations revealed an enormous wealth of subsurface cultural material. For example, 22 Indigenous sites revealed 40,000 stone artefacts; 10 historical sites found over 20,000 separate items. Further excavations on stone footings revealed the floor plan of the former Hibernian Hotel which was rediscovered and briefly recorded in 1990 as a two-room stone rubble structure. Excavations revealed the structure to be a six-room complex. The lesson for all us archaeologists here is that where major development is going to take place, surface surveying is often an inadequate method of assessing the indigenous and historic occupations of the sites. Much valuable cultural material and history can be lost under the blades of the bulldozers if surface surveying is the only method used for cultural assessment.

Tralee Homestead – Ann Forrest

Ann is a direct descendant of the Morrison family who initially settled at Springbank in the late 1850s then moved to Bulga Cree, The Angle on the Murrumbidgee, now Angle Crossing and thence to Tralee now situated on the southern edge of the Hume industrial suburb. The initial structure at Tralee was a slab house constructed in 1905 but may have been relocated from another property (possibly Angle Crossing). Today Tralee consists of a series of slab buildings in ruins and a more intact house known as 'Couranga'. Tralee is the story of a poor Irish immigrant family making a home in this part of Australia; living roughly at first but prospering on the labours to finally own a substantial amount of property. The site of Tralee today is uncertain as it is not heritage listed and the land has been ear-marked for industrial development. However, there may be a happy ending to the future of Tralee with interest in the site being displayed by the Chief Minister. Time will tell.

Archives ACT. Fenced and Forgotten No More – Elizabeth Estbergs

Little used in the past by many researchers the ACT Archives are now accessible through a website; www.archives.act.gov.au The archives commenced on 1 July 2008 holding ACT records over 20 years of age. The records include papers, audio recordings, ACT/NSW border survey books, photos, maps, plans, building files, leasing files and more. Search and request facilities are on the web site where researchers can find the document they need and request a copy. The reading room for the archives is at the ACT Heritage Library at the Woden town centre public library. Once fenced and forgotten by many researchers the archives are now proving to be a valuable resource.