



Old News

The Canberra Archaeological Society Inc Newsletter

February 2009

**2009 Public Lecture Series
Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6
7:30pm Wednesday 25 February**

CAS is delighted to join with the ANU Centre for Archaeological Research (CAR) in presenting this evening lecture series.

GIANT HORNED TORTOISES, BURIALS, LAPITA POTS AND OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST IN VANUATU

**Prof. Matthew Spriggs, GSM (Vanuatu), FSA, FAHA
School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU**

The start of a new five-year ARC-funded project in Vanuatu in 2008 has already turned up some interesting new discoveries at the earliest cemetery site in the Pacific Islands, at Teouma on the island of Efate in Vanuatu.

These include the interesting discovery that giant horned land tortoises were roaming the archipelago when people first arrived there about 3000 or so years ago, and formed a significant food resource for hungry long-distance canoe travellers.

More burials were located - including at a second cemetery site about 100 m away - but the base of the cultural deposits in the main excavation area were not reached in 2008. This was because of the depth of c.2800-2500 BP midden deposits on top of the cemetery. Things got interesting in the last week as burials and half-Lapita pots started turning up. But then it was all over for the year; the hole was partly filled in and we are looking forward to the first few weeks of the 2009 season.

All welcome. Entry is by gold coin donation at the door.

Please join us afterwards for light supper and to continue the discussion or start a new topic.



CAS 2009 Committee Contact Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President: Helen Cooke - the.cookies@bigpond.com mobile: 0408 443 243
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Master: Russell Kightley Media

Vale Andrée Rosenfeld

The ANU is hosting an event to celebrate Andrée Rosenfeld's life and academic achievements. The event will offer the opportunity for those who knew her to gather and reflect upon Andrée's significant contribution to archaeology, material culture and rock art research. It will be an occasion for recognising her inspired teaching, outstanding scholarship and her personal and professional influence on many.

Friday 6 March, 2009, 4 – 7 pm

Great Hall, University House, Australian National University, Canberra,
AUSTRALIA

This will be an informal event to remember Andrée amongst friends and colleagues. It will include invited speakers and a visual commemoration. Professor Howard Morphy will conduct the proceedings.
Light refreshments will be provided.

Whether or not you can attend the event in March, please consider contributing to the visual commemoration, details of which are in the attached document.

Please RSVP by Monday 16 February to:

event.for.andree@anu.edu.au



The Oseberg Ship burials – some new perspectives

By Peter Dowling

Right and cover photos: Oseberg ship



On a recent tour to the Scandinavian countries I, and the group I was with, had the great privilege to be able to see the famous Norwegian Oseberg ship, the huge array of associated burial artefacts, the mound in which they were buried and the two skeletons which were buried with the ship. The tour was organised through the ACT National Trust and followed the theme of the history and archaeology of the Vikings.

The well preserved Oseberg ship (21.6 metres long by 5.1 metres broad and 1.6 metres deep) was excavated in 1904 in Vestfold county, Norway. Radiocarbon, and dendrochronology dating has shown that the ship was built c.820 and was buried about 15 years later. The ship is now in a special purpose built museum in Oslo together with the many artefacts from the burial and other ship burials.

When the Oseberg Ship was excavated in 1904 two female skeletons, lying side by side, were found. Both had been placed in beds in a burial chamber hung with tapestries of fine wool and Byzantine silk. The two skeletons were examined in Oslo. One was aged at between fifty and sixty years, the other between twenty and thirty. Local tradition had it that the burial was that of Queen Åsa, mother of King Harold Fairhair but the chronology of the ship and burial is too old. The skeletons languished in the Oslo Museum until 1948 when they were placed in aluminium coffins and reburied in the mound.

The Oseberg ship and burials have been featured in most histories written of the Vikings. Mention is often given to the two skeletons giving their estimated ages – popular speculation and artwork often depict the younger as a beautiful fair-haired princess and the older as a relative or a form of lady-in-waiting; or vice versa depending on the imagination of the writers.

Long standing concerns for the preservation of the skeletons led to their re-excavation and re-examination in early 2007. What has come from the re-examination is quite a different story. Firstly the age estimates made in 1904 were way out. Modern age estimation techniques have now shown that the younger of the two was between fifty and sixty years and the older around eighty years of age. But even more interesting is the pathology of the older skeleton. Examination has shown a thickening on the inner sections of the frontal bone or forehead - the medical term for it is *internal frontal hyperostosis*. This thickening is characteristic of Morgagni's Syndrome, a condition almost exclusively in females. Not always life-threatening in itself, the syndrome's traits include obesity, age onset diabetes and virilism, a condition in which masculine characteristics develop in females. In all likelihood, this female may also have had a beard making her quite unique and well known in her society.

In 2008 the skeletons were put on public display in the Midgard Historical Centre, Vestfold County, Norway near to the mound in which they, along with the ship, were originally buried. Our tour group then had the great experience of seeing all the main elements of the burial, something that not many other visitors to Norway have had.

Further examination of the skeletons is continuing including DNA and trace element analysis. So watch this space for further information on these two women.



Polynesians originated in Taiwan 5,200 years ago, claims new study

Before entering Philippines, Austronesians paused in Southeast Asia for around a thousand years: research

(Taiwan News 24 Jan 09)

The ancestors of today's Polynesians originated in Taiwan around 5,200 years ago, spreading into the Philippines and eastward into the Pacific, according to a study of the region's languages released yesterday.

Scientists at Auckland University used computers to analyze vocabulary from 400 Austronesian languages from South-East Asia and the Pacific to study how the Pacific was settled.

The Austronesian language family is one of the largest in the world, including 1,200 languages spread across the Pacific region, Professor Russell Gray said.

"By studying the basic vocabulary from these languages, such as words for animals, simple verbs, colours and numbers, we can trace how these languages evolved," Gray said.

"The relationships between these languages give us a detailed history of Pacific settlement."

The results, published in the latest issue of the journal *Science*, show how migration from Taiwan paused for long periods.

Before entering the Philippines, the Austronesians paused in Southeast Asia for around a thousand years, and then spread across the 7,000km from the Philippines to Polynesia in less than a thousand years.

After settling Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, the Austronesians stopped for another thousand years, before spreading further into Polynesia and eventually reaching New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Island.

New Zealand was believed to have been settled by the Maori about 700 to 800 years ago.

Research fellow Simon Greenhill said the stages of the expansion could be linked with new technology, such as better voyaging canoes.

"Using these new technologies, the Austronesians and Polynesians were able to rapidly spread through the Pacific in one of the greatest human migrations ever," he said.

Other archeological and DNA research has supported the theory that Polynesians are linked to the indigenous people of Taiwan.



Secretary Sue Aylen congratulates our newest Life Member, Marilyn Folger, for her unstinting contribution to CAS and local archaeology (for longer than we will admit!) And of course this is a family membership to include hard working Louis.

Welcome to new members:

Sam Hall and family; Kirsten Willcox & James Montgomery; and Roger Hobbs.

Have you renewed your membership for 2009?

Conferences and Lectures

The Sydney Historical Archaeology Professional Workshop (SHAP) 2009 will be held on Friday the 27th February. The SHAP Workshop is meant to be an informative day which aims to be all-inclusive and welcoming to people from all areas of the archaeological industry and wider including practitioners, academics, students and developers. It is hoped that this workshop will present new and interesting historical sites from in and around Sydney and generate discussion and debate.

People from a range of fields have kindly volunteered their time and so there will be a great variety of topics being presented at the workshop. These include: 1) Applications for geophysical investigations in historical archaeology, 2) Digital archiving, 3) US ICOMOS Internship Program, 4) Cemetery Archaeology, 5) Recent excavations and more (Ed: even Crinigans Hut!)

The workshop will be held at the Hall of St Stephen's Anglican Church on Church Street, Newtown (not in the Church itself).

The Hall is located near Camperdown Cemetery, next door to the Church. Admission fee is \$50.00 or \$35.00 for students, pensioners and unwaged. This fee includes lunch, and morning and afternoon teas. Please register and pay in advance so we can arrange catering.

If you can't open the registration form, please contact either Krissy (krissy@australarchaeology.com.au) or Pamela (pamela@australarchaeology.com.au).



**Inaugural Lecture to be presented by the
Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.**

Presented by Dr Anna Rubbo, Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Sydney on Thursday 12 February at 6.00pm at the National Library of Australia theatre.

The cost will be \$10 for members of the Walter Burley Griffin Society and \$15 for non members. The lecture will be followed by light refreshments.

**For bookings by 9 February please ring 6286 4395: 0415 602738;
bjodgers@inet.net.au**

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To celebrate Darwin Day 12 February 2009 Canberra Skeptics presents –

Darwin, Wallace, and the Ascent of Man

Speaker: Emeritus Professor Ian Cowan

On Thursday, 12 February 2009

Time: 6:00 .m

Place: Lecture theatre, Innovations Building, Eggleston Rd, ANU

There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course the wind blows." So said Darwin. But Wallace thought, "a superior intelligence has guided the development of man in a definite direction, and for a special purpose..." Emeritus Professor Ian Cowan will address some of the arguments and circumstances that lead to such divergent opinions.

Please note the new venue - Innovations Building, ANU campus - and the slight departure in date from our normal 13th of the month - the 12th is of course the great man's birthday!

Emeritus Professor Ian Cowan FAA - Formerly Head Environmental Biology Group, Research School of Biological Sciences ANU. Ian lives in Canberra (an ANU RSBS Visiting Fellow), and in his active retirement, continues to sustain a fulfilling career as scientist, student of philosophy and bon vivant!



The preliminary program for the Pacific Island Archaeology in the 21st Century: Relevance and Engagement conference is at (www.pacificarchaeology2009.com).

'Beyond the limits of location'

Friday 27 to Sunday 29 March 2009

Yass & District Historical Society

St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong

An event not to be missed!

The sixth *Beyond the limits of location*, a weekend seminar for local and family historians, will be held at St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong. The seminar's title is taken from Galong's location which was outside the nineteen counties when settled by Edward 'Ned' Ryan c1826 and subsequently 'beyond the limits of location' set down in 1829 by Governor Ralph Darling.

Presentations will focus on history and sources for local and family historians and we have been fortunate to have assembled a great line up of speakers who have much to offer - their collective expertise is phenomenal!

Knowledge of everything from theatre, movie making, archaeology, heritage wars, notorious strumpets (!!!), biographies, convicts and Aboriginal trackers to educating the masses, bad boys in uniform, the high country and even the odd game of footie will be served up with the odd verse or two!

It is not all talk either - country hospitality, pre-dinner drinks at sunset, dinner in an historic house and fabulous Australian music tempered with good company and a sense of fun.

For full details of the seminar featuring a great line up of speakers see the program:
<http://www.yasshistory.org.au/Beyond2009%20brief%20prog.htm>



Book worms

A Story of Capital Hill by Ann Gugler

***BOOK LAUNCH by Jill Waterhouse at St John the Baptist Church REID
21 February 2009 at 2.30pm in the ROBERTSON ROOM
All welcome***

Capital Hill is one of the Gura Bung Dhaura hills used by the Ngunawal as a camping ground on their way from Black's Hill via Stirling Ridge, the *Gap*, Red Hill and Mugga to Tuggeranong. In March 1909 surveyors camped on the hill where they commenced their survey of the 36 square miles of city area.

In 1911 Walter Burley Griffin put a circle around the hill and named it Capitol and marked it the centre of his city design. Two years later on 12 March 1913 Lady Denman stood on the hill and named the future city, Canberra. During World War One (1914-1918) major construction of the city was put on hold and it was not until 1920 that work recommenced and perhaps to mark this return to construction the Prince of Wales on 21 June 1920 laid a stone on the hill to mark the centre of the future city.

In the 1920s the hill was part of Westlake – an area of land that stretched from Stirling Ridge in the West to Capital Hill and back from the Molonglo River to Red Hill. Here contractor John Howie erected his settlement and the government built 61 cottages in *The Gap* and three tent camps that housed the men who built Hotel Canberra, the main intercepting sewer and the provisional parliament house.

Copies of the 252 page book at the launch will be \$25.00 (normal price - \$30) and available from Ann Gugler 02-62900057 annrobina@actewagl.net.au following the launch.

The Canberra and District Historical Society is a repository for resources relating to the history of our area: <http://www.canberrahistory.org.au/> and try the Gateway.

The Society provides local history research facilities for members. A well-stocked reference library holds full sets of the Canberra Historical Journal and the Newsletter, as well as copies of books produced by members of the Society.

Research resources also include collections of photographs, maps, and audio tapes of oral histories and lectures given at monthly meetings. The Society also has a valuable collection of newspaper clippings, filed under subject/ places/ people headings.

An online catalogue provides access to the wide range of resources held at the Society's Canberra research centre. Indexes of the resources are also available at the research centre.



LANYON HARVEST MUSIC FESTIVAL
Sundays in March 5.00 - 7.30pm (Music commences at 5.30)

BRING A PICNIC AND A RUG AND ENJOY THE GLORIOUS GARDENS

Cost: Gold coin donation (per person)

Bookings: Not required, unless intending to dine at the Lanyon Café. Café reservations can be made on 6237 5268

Enquiries: 6235 5677

In 2009 we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Cunningham homestead at Lanyon. In recognition of this significant milestone, Lanyon Homestead will host the inaugural Lanyon Harvest Music Festival. This event will draw together a dynamic range of local performing artists who will play on the homestead verandah as the sun sets over the Brindabellas. Relax on the Bunya Lawn as the kids join in the activities in the special Children's Tent. See the Homestead lit for night-time and don't forget to stock up on organic fruit and vegetables harvested fresh from the Lanyon garden. Bring along a picnic, or purchase food and drink on site.

Sunday 1 March

A magical evening of opera in the garden. Voice students from the ANU School of Music will perform opera favourites, along with vocal music that was popular 150 years ago, when Lanyon Homestead was newly built.

Sunday 8 March

Sunday 15 March

The Tuggeranong Valley Band is always a favourite at Lanyon. Established in 1980, the TVB is a community band that plays at major Canberra events. Join them for an evening of jazz, classical and big band music.

Sunday 22 March

Be sure to wear your dancing shoes as the Monaro Folk Society Big Band and the Australian Bush Dancers Display Group whip up a musical frenzy at Lanyon. Join in an evening of Australian traditional music and bush dancing.

Sunday 29 March

A sumptuous evening of jazz with seasoned performer, Eric Ajaye and his band. Born in New York, Eric has played all over the world and has a great respect for the deep, rich history of jazz.

Sunday 29 March

Annie and the Armadillos

Join Annie and her band for a fantastic evening of groove, soul, R&B and jazz. Whatever Annie and the Armadillos choose to play they are always a favourite, famous for their lively performances that excite the senses

For more exciting happenings at Lanyon, especially interesting to gardeners, see

<http://www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au/lanyon/public.html>