



Canberra Archaeological Society Inc

Old News

June 2009

Canberra Archaeological Society/Centre for Archaeological Research
2009 Public Lecture
Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6
7:30pm Wednesday 17 June 2009

Impacts on the cultural heritage and archaeological sites of Iraq during the
Coalition Invasion

Dr Lynley Wallis

In the wake of the massive destruction of buildings and monuments during World War II UNESCO sponsored the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (also known as the Hague Convention), which came into effect in 1956. The Convention requires that signatory countries draw up a list of cultural property of major importance that other countries should respect during times of armed conflict. The Convention covers immovable and movable cultural heritage, including monuments of architecture, art or history, archaeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest, as well as scientific collections of all kinds regardless of their origin or ownership. It was primarily designed to ensure that losses to the world's cultural heritage such as occurred in WWII never happened again. Currently, more than 118 nation states (including Australia, though interesting not the United States nor the United Kingdom) are parties to the Hague Convention. Iraq (comprising the lands of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers) is home to some of the world's oldest and most significant archaeological and cultural heritage sites. As well as being one of earliest centres of agriculture and urban settlements, it was also home to the development of cuneiform writing on clay tablets approximately 5000 years ago.

In addition to the numerous archaeological sites scattered through the country, Iraq's museums, particularly the National Museum in Baghdad, are repositories for many thousands of unique, irreplaceable sculptures, inscribed tablets, seals and other cultural objects that are tangible reminders of the fascinating history of the surrounding region.

In this talk I consider the effect of the 2003 Coalition Invasion not only on the archaeological sites of Iraq, but also on the collections held by the National Museum in Baghdad, and raise the issue of the importance of such sites and collections for the construction of national identity.

***All welcome. Entry is by gold coin donation at the door.
Please join us afterwards for light supper to meet the speaker and continue the
discussion.***

Dr Lynley Wallis is currently employed as a senior lecturer in archaeology and cultural heritage management in the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University. She has more than 15 years experience, having worked variously in the tertiary education sector, government heritage agencies, and as a private consultant. Her research interests are broad and range from exploration of the long-term Indigenous occupation of northern Australia and the Coorong region of SA, to the interactions between Indigenous groups and settlers in north-western Queensland during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to reconstructing palaeoclimatic and vegetation patterns through the past 40,000 years, to the geophysical, historical and archaeological investigation of historic cemeteries.

Forthcoming lectures, all at 7.30pm in Manning Clark Theatre 6 unless otherwise advised.

July 15 in Haydon Allen Tank	Doug Williams	The archaeology of Crace compared to HQJOC Bungendore
August 19	Dr Peter Dowling	Vikings!
September 16	Tegan Kelly	TBA
October 21	Prof Graham Connah	People of the Lake: Reconstructing human history in Africa
November 18	Dr Tony Barham	Tsunamis in WA

CAS 2009 Committee Contact Details

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- **Membership Secretary:** Wendy Lees
- **Committee Members:** Laura Breen, Faye Powell, Bob Legge
- **Newsletter Editor:** Helen and the crew
- **Web Master:** Russell Kightley Media

Welcome to our new members!

Lauren McSweyn, Melanie van Twest, Fiona McRonald, Georgia Burgess, Peter and Julia Burgess, Joseph Henry, Phoebe Bischoff.

National Archaeology Week, May 2009

NAW was a great success this year – well done CAS members and thanks for all your support.

Katrina and the Dowlings from the National Trust (ACT) gave us an excellent Trivia Night, lots of fun in the Uni Bar. Once again the punters were too clever by half and scored well. Congratulations to winners and all.

Dr Jo Macdonald's presentation on the excavation of a ritual killing wowed our members and a good number of new people attracted by the NAW advertising.

A summary of the ACT Historic Archaeology Workshop is in the final stages of editing; members will be advised when it is available on the CAS website.

Field trip to London Bridge caves and homestead

An intrepid band of members braved the cool weather and the furry directions and managed to be inside the homestead during the only showers worthy of the name. This is a fascinating example of a homestead that grew as family size increases demanded. The styles used reflect the relative affluence and materials available at the times, a useful example for those attempting to interpret archaeological sites of similar time periods.

A not-so-gentle traverse (we know which path to take next time!) took us to the caves where Peter Dowling explained the geomorphology and Helen Cooke talked about the excavations she and Phil Boot undertook in 1989, including the general setting of burial patterns in the high country.

Interest in the trip was high so we may run it again later in the year.

More on the Viking Oseberg burials – an osteobiography of the elder female Peter Dowling

In previous editions of *Old News* we have been discussing the famous Viking Ship burial excavated at Oseberg in Norway. Two female skeletons were found in the ship among a large collection of grave artefacts placed to assist them in their afterlife. We now know that they died around 834 and were aged about 80 and 50 years at time of death and that they must have been important people in the society in which they lived. But what was their life like? Their skeletal remains can give us an insight into the life-styles of these two females – an osteobiography of their lives. Let's look at the older female first.

Examination of her skeleton has revealed that she suffered from osteoporosis (brittle bones) which is consistent with her advanced age when she died. She also had a fracture in one of the lumbar vertebrae (lower back) and two of the cervical vertebrae (neck) had fused together. These conditions most likely resulted from the osteoporotic condition coupled with a physically active life. As a result she would have had a stooping posture and difficulty in turning her head. X-ray examinations have shown calcifications inside the major long bones (arms & legs) indicating two long periods where she

had been bedridden for periods longer than a month due to unspecified illness during her childhood. The first period was when she was 8-10 years old and later when she was in her early teens, around 14-15 years old. As an adult, and at least ten years before she died, she sustained serious compression damage in her left knee, perhaps from a fall impacting on her brittle knees. In at least the last ten years of her life her mobility would have been seriously impaired making walking a very painful event.

But her pathological condition does not end here. She had cancer and terminal cancer at that, which most likely was the cause of her death. Traces of active tumours have been detected throughout her skeleton strongly indicating that she had metastasizing cancer spreading throughout her bones and her organs, probably originating from primary breast or uterine cancer. This Viking female represents the first known case of cancer in Norway.

This woman, who had such a privileged burial, did indeed live a very hard life. But her life problems did not end with these ailments. As mentioned in an earlier edition of *Old News*, she was born with a genetic disability known as Morgagni syndrome. This disability is a hormonal disturbance, characterized by a thickening (hyperostosis) of the bone tissue inside the brow region of the frontal bone giving her face a rugged looking appearance. The disturbance only occurs in older women (usually over 45 years) and leads to a whole host of disabilities including weight increase, visual disorders, vertigo, loss of sense of smell, glucose intolerance, excessive eating, stroke, paralysis and reduced production of female hormones, a process called virilisation. With this syndrome she would have most likely developed a short thick throat giving her a deep, baritone-like voice, and the propensity for increased hair growth.

In a later issue we will look at the life-style signs in the skeleton of the younger female.

Prehistoric Paintings Threatened by Bacteria 'Cocktail'

The organisms damage the Lascaux drawings

More than 16,000 years ago, a group of humans took refuge in the Lascaux caves, in what is now southwestern France, probably living a nomadic existence and seeking refuge from predators. In the course of their stay, they inscribed the walls with primitive drawings of animals that they saw on their perilous journeys, pictures that were since forgotten and were only again discovered on September 12th, 1940. Since then, efforts of protecting the drawings from decay have been ongoing, and, four years ago, experts sprayed the walls against fungi, which threatened the murals. Now, because of that, new types of bacteria have begun devouring the priceless paintings.

Of the approximately 2,000 images that were found on the walls, about 900 are still well enough preserved to be made out. Horses, stags, felines, birds, bears, cattle, bison, a rhinoceros and a human make up the most massive collection of prehistoric cave art in the [world](#) today. They are all coming under threat from black mold, which experts are currently trying to keep away from the cultural artifacts. The *Fusarium solani* fungus, as well as other bacterial populations, which only appeared after the original spraying efforts, are however difficult to keep in check, and experts are currently looking for new ways of getting rid of them.

"The Lascaux cave is now a reservoir of potential pathogenic bacteria and protozoa similar to those found in disease outbreaks linked to contaminated air-conditioning systems and cooling towers in hospitals and public buildings," explained Seville, Spain-based Spanish Institute of Natural and Agrobiological Research expert Cesareo Saiz-Jimenez. He is a member of the team involved with the conservation efforts. The benzalkonium chloride spray that is responsible for the current state of affairs was applied progressively, between 2001 and 2004.

Some say that it was the discovery of the cave that triggered the decay of the paintings. Since it was opened to the public, more than 1,800 people have visited it every day, until it was closed for viewing, in 1965. Their breath would have significantly altered the environment of the cave, as did the artificial light and the air conditioning systems that were installed at the location. Thus, murals that have endured for about 16,000 years started getting affected by the new atmosphere, which sported numerous types of bacteria that were new to the secluded environment.

At this point, the cave is off-limits to even conservationists and historians. Hermetically sealed. The entrance only opens once every week for a single individual, who monitors climate conditions. Occasionally, a larger science team is allowed in, to conduct maintenance work on the walls, and to assess the condition of the drawings, New Scientist reports.

Source: <http://news.softpedia.com/news/Prehistoric-Paintings-Threatened-by-Bacteria-039-Cocktail-039-112394.shtml>

Cave Painting Depicts Extinct Marsupial Lion

Stephan Reeb; Natural History Magazine; [Livescience.com](http://livescience.com) – Sat May 9, 8:31 pm ET

Modern Australia lacks big land predators, but until about 30,000 years ago, the continent was ruled by *Thylacoleo carnifex*, the marsupial "lion."

Several well-preserved skeletons of the leopard-size beast have been found. Now, a [newly discovered cave painting](#) offers a glimpse of the animal's external appearance.

In June 2008, Tim Willing, a naturalist and tour guide, photographed an ancient painting on a rockshelter wall near the shore of northwestern Australia. Kim Akerman, an independent anthropologist based in Tasmania, says the painting unmistakably depicts a marsupial lion.

It shows the requisite catlike muzzle, large forelimbs, and heavily clawed front paws. And it portrays the animal with a striped back, a tufted tail, and pointed ears.

Those last three features aren't preserved in skeletons, but Aborigines would have known them well. Australia's first people landed on the continent at least 40,000 years ago and were contemporaries of the big predator.

Previously known rock paintings hinted at marsupial lions, but were rudimentary and could have depicted the other striped marsupial predator, the dog-size [Tasmanian "tiger."](#) That species succumbed to competition from humans in 1936, much as the marsupial lion may have done millennia before.

The findings were detailed in *Antiquity*.

Historical Archaeologists Needed

JCIS Consultants is running a salvage excavation of a mill site in the rural town of Yass (NSW) for 3-4 weeks from the 25th June 2009.

We are looking for a small number of experienced historical archaeologists to staff the excavation. The site is suitable for archaeologist's commuting from Canberra (but not Sydney)

Applicants should be prepared to work as sub-consultants to JCIS Consultants. Please send a brief resume outlining your relevant experience and qualifications as well as your hourly rate to jane@jcis.net.au

If you have any queries please contact Dr Iain Stuart at JCIS Consultants (iain@jcis.net.au)

Conferences and Lectures

ASHA/AIMA Conference: In a Global Context

Join us 24-26 September 2009 in Launceston, Tasmania for the ASHA/AIMA annual conference. The Launceston Tram Shed Function Centre, Inveresk, will be the conference venue. Excursions will be organised to sample the heritage, culture and cuisine of northern Tasmania.

Call for Sessions – Deadline 1st May

For more conference information...keep an eye on the website, it's currently under development:
<http://members.iinet.net.au/~jodysteele/index.htm>

AAA 2009“Old Guard, New Guard”

will be held over four days from Friday 11th to Monday 14th December at Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia. Prior to the conference, a one-day course in Archaeological Geophysics is scheduled for 9th December, and a session of the National Archaeology Students Conference will be held on Thursday 10th. AAA conference registration will open with welcome drinks on the evening of Thursday 10th. The conference dinner is at the National Wine Centre on Monday 14th. Post-conference tours are planned for Tuesday 15th December. Adelaide has a world-renowned museum, the South Australian Museum, which has the largest Indigenous collections in Australia, and is located close to the wine regions of the Clare, Barossa, Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale, as well as the World Heritage-listed Naracoorte Caves.

The keynote speaker for the conference is Professor Geoff Bailey, University of York. Professor Bailey has conducted research on shell middens in Spain, Australia and Denmark, and is currently working on submerged landscapes on the European continental shelf. His research on coastal economies and human responses to long-term environmental change is especially relevant to current Australasian research.

Session proposals should be emailed to Dr Lynley Wallis (Lynley.Wallis@flinders.edu.au) by June 1st 2009.

For general conference enquiries, contact Alice.Gorman@flinders.edu.au.

“Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies: Perspectives from Anthropology, History and Material Culture Studies.”

A Conference to be held at the National Museum of Australia, in association with the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University.

Monday 9 November – Tuesday 10 November 2009

FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

Panels so far proposed include:

The transformation of relations and transactions within and around missions and stations.

The role of sexuality in the intercultural economy in Australia.

Transactions between fringe camps and towns.

The period of transition from low wage/ no wage to CDEP.

Stolen wages and the contemporary efforts to secure recompense

Please send abstracts of papers addressing one or more of the conference themes (these need not be attached to a panel at this stage, but will be assigned to panels later), and/or proposals for panels by email to Ian.Keen@anu.edu.au or by mail to:

IPAE Conference

School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200



Book worms

Archaeologists, Historians and Heritage Practitioners

‘Thirsty Work’ is the culmination of 29 years work; the book details the history of cordial manufacturers and manufactories in Sydney and environs, since settlement up to about 1940, and includes images of nearly all containers used by the local manufacturers. It thus provides a unique data base of chronological, patent information and markings for 1000s of glass and ceramic containers routinely found on Sydney (& NSW) archaeological sites. It is profusely illustrated and runs to 1040 pages.

Copies can only be obtained by order/payment on the website www.thirstywork.com.au. You can also view sample histories and images.

Free journal articles! Lots of archaeology in Wiley-Blackwell.

<http://blackwell.sites.optin.com.au/readcamp.rsp?rin=1z5745004-20115344&campaign=0fv>

New E-publication edited by David J. Addison and Christophe Sand

RECENT ADVANCES in the ARCHAEOLOGY of the FIJI/WEST-POLYNESIA REGION

published by Dept Anthropology, Otago Uni. See the following URL:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/anthropology/news/publications.html>

The Hobbit: Out of Africa

Earlier this month, researchers presented work at the annual meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, in Chicago, suggesting that *H. floresiensis* may have left Africa a full million years earlier than any other hominids were thought to have ventured out from the home continent.

Full story:

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1892606,00.html>

As they say, if pigs can't fly, how come swine 'flu?