

May 2009



**CAS/CAR 2009 Public Lecture  
Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6  
7:30pm Wednesday 20 May**

***National Archaeology Week lecture***

**The slaying of the Narabeen Man:  
first Australian archaeological evidence for use of a death spear**

**Jo McDonald**

Director: Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd  
Senior Adjunct Research Fellow, Research School of Humanities, ANU

In 2005 Electricity workers excavating to install a conduit in beach-side Narabeen encountered human bones. They called the Police, who called the Coroner, who in turn assessed that the bones – all from the lower body - were probably Aboriginal. After consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal land Council, a team of archaeologists re-opened the trench to find out if there was more to be found.

A fully articulated male skeleton was found – and the associated evidence indicated that this was unique in Australia. Artefacts around and in the body and forensic evidence on the skeleton showed that this man had been slain using a 'death' spear. Jo McDonald describes the discovery of this significant archaeological find and contextualises this in the context of Sydney prehistory.

Jo McDonald is a cultural heritage management consultant working mainly on the south-east coast of Australia. She has excavated a number of major archaeological sites in the Sydney region. She is also a Senior Adjunct Research Fellow at the Research School of Humanities at ANU, with a current research interest in the rock art and management of the Canning Stock Route.

***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.***



Narrabeen man excavation

**Forthcoming lectures, all in Manning Clark Theatre 6 unless otherwise advised.**

June 17	Dr Lynley Wallis	Impacts on the cultural heritage and archaeological sites of Iraq during the Coalition Invasion
July 15 in Haydon Allen Tank	Doug Williams	Crace compared to HQJOC Bungendore
August 19	Prof Graham Connah	People of the Lake: Reconstructing human history in Africa
September 16	Tegan Kelly	TBA
October 21	Tony Barham	Tsunamis in WA
November 18	Peter D	Vikings

**CAS 2009 Committee Contact Details**

**President:** Helen Cooke [the.cookies@bigpond.com](mailto:the.cookies@bigpond.com) mobile: 0408 443 243

**Vice Presidents:** Katarina Boljkovac, [boljkatica@hotmail.com](mailto:boljkatica@hotmail.com) and Peter Dowling [di.peterdowling@bigpond.com](mailto:di.peterdowling@bigpond.com)

**Treasurer and Membership:** Wendy Lees, [lastlees5@hotmail.com](mailto:lastlees5@hotmail.com)

• **Secretary:** Sue Aylen [sueaylen@dodo.com.au](mailto:sueaylen@dodo.com.au)

• **Membership Secretary:** Wendy Lees

• **Committee Members:** Laura Breen, Faye Powell, Bob Legge

• **Newsletter Editor:** Helen and the crew

• **Web Master:** Russell Kightley Media

## **Crinigan's Hut, Wanderer Ct, Amaroo.**

**Open day on April 4<sup>th</sup> went very well and the weather was perfect this time! We had a number of families with school children interested in their local history. The picture on our front page shows the bush dancers in their appropriate costumes, listening to Marilyn talking about the site.**

**National Archaeology Week** aims to increase public awareness of Australian archaeology and the work of Australian archaeologists both at home and abroad, and to promote the importance of protecting Australia's unique archaeological heritage. Held from the 17th to the 23th of May 2009, this exciting nationwide program of events and activities will include public lectures, seminars, exhibits, demonstration excavations and displays. Check out your state for events in your local area.

<http://www.archaeologyweek.com/>

**13 May 2009: Hobbits in context: hominin biogeography in island Southeast Asia**

**18 May 2009: National Archaeology Week Trivia Night**

**20 May 2009: The Slaying of the Narrabeen Man**

**23 May 2009: ACT Historical Archaeology Workshop**

**Field trip: London Bridge caves and homestead and Googong Dam foreshores,  
Sunday 31 May 2009: 2pm**

Take the old Cooma Road from Queanbeyan (turn south into Lowe St) and keep going past the first turn to Googong Dam, until you see a road to the left signposted 'London Bridge'. Go all the way to a gate with grid and carry on. You will have one gate to open and shut after that, then aim for the Woolshed.

Ranger Adrian Brown has kindly offered to lead us on a trip to this interesting area. He will be able to open the fence around the homestead so we can enjoy its vernacular architecture and conservation.

There is an electric barbecue at the Woolshed so if you want to get there about noon and have lunch first.

To be covered by CAS insurance, all participants must be financial members – you can join on the day. Phone 0408 443 243 for more information.

**If the weather is inclement the event will be cancelled.**

Summary of report to ACT Heritage:

In 1989, Boot and Cooke investigated the London Bridge karst area around Burra Creek at the southern end of Googong Foreshores Reserve. The 100ha survey area included alluvial flats and creek banks and two major ridgelines running parallel to Burra Creek. Five isolated finds (NPWS 57-2-0165 - 0169) and one open campsite (NPWS 57-2-0172) were located. Two limestone caves were also excavated. Seven stone artefacts and numerous faunal remains, mainly rat from owl kills, were recovered from Douglas Cave (NPWS 57-2-0170). Burra Shelter (NPWS 57-2-0171) yielded three quartz flakes, two chips and two hearths dated at around 700–900BP, but relatively few faunal remains were recovered. The consultants concluded that the archaeological material probably indicated sparse Aboriginal occupation of the caves during the last 1000 years (Boot and Cooke 1989:97).

## More on the Oseberg Ship Burials

Peter Dowling

In a previous edition of *Old News* I wrote about the recovery of the two female skeletons from the famous Norwegian Oseberg Ship burial dated circa 830s during the Viking period. The skeletons are now on public display but sufficient skeletal material has been retained for further examination which is beginning to reveal more about these two females and their times.

Skeletons are made up primarily of organic and inorganic material. The main organic component is collagen, a fibrous protein responsible for the strength of the bone. The main inorganic component is calcium but bone also contains small amounts of many other mineral elements. These elements are deposited in the bones from the food the person eats during their life time – the old saying, 'you are what you eat', is exactly that. Teeth also take in these elements during the years of formation. Taking this brief explanation a bit further, chemical analysis of bone in archaeological contexts can also reveal isotopes of the elements. Isotopes are just variant forms of a particular element, having differing numbers of neutrons in their nucleus. So an isotopic signature (or relationship between the isotopes of the elements) in both bone and teeth can then give an indication of what type of foods were eaten by each individual. Most people interested in archaeology know of one famous isotope, carbon 14 ( $^{14}\text{C}$ ) which is used in the process of radio-carbon dating. Another carbon isotope, carbon 13 ( $^{13}\text{C}$ ), has a somewhat different role in archaeology. Analysis of carbon 13 in skeletons gives an isotopic signature which can provide indications of a particular type of diet.

Examination of the  $^{13}\text{C}$  isotope in the skeletons of both the Oseberg women show that their diet consisted of much more meat from land animals than it did from fish. This is mildly surprising when we consider that both were placed in a Viking long boat and buried in a mound which was close to the sea shore. One might have supposed that they would have had primarily a sea food diet being connected with a coastal environment. But, as we all know and have learnt suppositions can often be incorrect.

The mystery of these two females deepens further when DNA analysis was done. Extracting and analysing DNA from archaeological skeletons is a long and complicated process but if successful it can reveal many things about the individual. In the case of the Oseberg younger female, DNA was successfully extracted and a number of haplogroups were identified. (The term haplogroup comes from the Greek word 'haploûs' meaning single or simple and in genetics refers to a single group of genes which occupy the same section of a chromosome and which are passed on as a single group). Haplogroups can be used to identify relationships between people or a particular region of birth. A particular haplogroup named U7 was identified in the younger female. This finding is interesting, as this haplogroup is nearly absent in modern Europeans but is common in Iranians. This could mean two things: perhaps the female was born in the area we now know of as Iran, and died in Viking Scandinavia, or perhaps her ancestors came from that area. We know that the Viking travellers established a wide network of trading routes across Europe as far as the Black Sea area and also that some groups of Scandinavians migrated to region. So, there is a connection between modern Norway and Iran that could account for the genetic origins of this female. But if this is so, then why was she buried with such honour in a Viking long boat and interned in a large barrow? Was she the primary person in the burial, her importance derived from her origins? Perhaps this explains the presence of fine Byzantine silk recovered from the burial chamber of the long boat. Or was she a servant or even a slave of the older women for whom the elaborate burial was for? Intriguing questions for which, I am afraid, there is no immediate answer.

In the next issue I will look at what the skeletons can tell us about the life of these two females.

# Conferences and Lectures

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES PRESENTS

2009 MULVANEY LECTURE

Wednesday 13th May 2009 7.30pm  
Theatre 1 Manning Clark Centre, Union Court ANU

**'Hobbits in context: *hominin biogeography in island Southeast Asia*'**

Professor Mike Morwood, **University of Wollongong**  
*This lecture is free and open to the public*

Finding evidence for a tiny, new species of human on the island of Flores in Indonesia was unexpected, but no more so than evidence for hominins on the island by 880,000 years ago. This lecture will explain why, with reference to the dispersal and evolutionary histories of other terrestrial animals in island Southeast Asia. It will conclude with some of the implications for early hominin and modern human biogeography in the region.

THE MULVANEY LECTURE IS HELD BIENNIALLY TO HONOUR PROFESSOR JOHN MULVANEY,  
FOUNDATION PROFESSOR OF PREHISTORY IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS

Mike Morwood obtained his MA in archaeology at Auckland University (NZ), and his PhD at the Australian National University, where John Mulvaney was one of his supervisors. He has been on staff at the University of New England since 1981, and more recently at the University of Wollongong.

In Australia, he has undertaken research projects in a number of regions including Southeast Cape York Peninsula, the North Queensland Highlands and the Kimberley. Since 1997, however, he has focused on interdisciplinary research projects in Indonesia, on the islands of Java, Sulawesi, Flores and Timor. He co-led the team of Indonesian and Australian scientists who discovered the skeleton of a tiny new species of human, *Homo floresiensis* - known in the popular press as 'Hobbit'.

**Following the Lecture there will be a supper in the foyer of the Manning Clark Centre.  
If you wish to attend the supper, please contact Christine Dwyer T: 61253498 or E:  
[Christine.dwyer@anu.edu.au](mailto:Christine.dwyer@anu.edu.au) by Friday 8th May for catering purposes**

And see our book review and this article:

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25228894-30417,00.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>

THE FRIENDS OF THE ANU CLASSICS MUSEUM

invite you to an illustrated lecture by Dr Tamara Lewit

ANCIENT WEDGWOOD: ROMAN 'SAMIAN' WARE, SHIPPING, FORTS, AND FIREWOOD

WEDNESDAY 13 MAY AT 8.00 PM in the HAYDON-ALLEN TANK, Australian National University

## CANBERRA SKEPTICS

Next meeting will be a screening of

### FLIGHT OF DODOS

Director, Randy Olsen (84 minutes)

Wednesday 13th May at 7.15pm

Lecture Theatre, Innovations Building, Australian National University.  
(Building 124, grid C3 at <http://campusmap.anu.edu.au/>)

Admission Free but donations are welcome.

Who are the real "dodos"? Are they the scientists who are failing to promote evolution, the intelligent design advocates or the American Public who get fooled by the salesmanship of evolution critics? This entertaining documentary uses the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* legal battle to examine the issues.

If you wish, join us for a bite to eat beforehand at nearby University House. From 6.15pm, we will try to secure the large table immediately to the right as you enter the renovated cellar bar from the Fellows garden.

No need to book, enquires to Nick on 6262 5966.

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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.

Sessions are invited on the conference theme: "Old Guard, New Guard".  
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.



## Book worms

A New Human

By [Mike Morwood](#), [Penny van Oosterzee](#)

In October 2004, a team of Australian and Indonesian anthropologists led by Mike Morwood and Raden Pandji Soejono stunned the world with their announcement of the discovery of the first example of a new species of human, *Homo floresiensis*, which they nicknamed the "Hobbit." This was no creation of Tolkien's fantasy, however, but a tool-using, fire-making, cooperatively hunting person. The more Morwood and his colleagues revealed about the find, the more astonishing it became: standing only three feet tall with brains a little larger than a can of cola, the Hobbits forced anthropologists and everyone to reconsider what it means to be human.

Morwood's work was no ordinary academic exercise. Along the way he had to tread warily through the cultural landscape of Indonesia—he has an embarrassing mishap with some hard-to-chew pork—and he demonstrated that sometimes the life of a real archaeologist can be a bit like Indiana Jones's when he risked his neck in an ocean-going raft to experience how ancient Indonesians might have navigated the archipelago.

Even more, Morwood had to navigate the rock shoals of an archaeological bureaucracy that could be obtuse and even spiteful, and when the Hobbits became embroiled in scientific controversy—as no find of such magnitude could avoid—it proved easy for Morwood to get nearly swamped with trouble. Finds were stolen and damaged, and the backbiting was fierce. But the light of science, once brightened, is difficult to dim, and the story of the indefatigable Morwood's fight to defend his find discovery is an inspiration.

*Available for \$8 from QBD in Woden Westfield – good read prior to hearing his lecture.*

The Sydney Observatory excavation multi-media presentation.

<http://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2008/national/fort-phillip-dig/index.html>

