



Picture: CAS trip to Lake Mungo

## 2005 Public Lecture Series

Wednesday 16 February 2004

7.30 pm, Manning Clark Theatre 6, ANU

### TEOUMA (VANUATU): THE OLDEST PACIFIC ISLAND CEMETERY AND ITS MISSING HEADS

At the end of 2003 bulldozers discovered a Lapita site at Teouma, on the south coast of the island of Efate, just outside of Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu. The Lapita culture which spread from the Bismarck Archipelago, just to the east of New Guinea, out as far as Tonga and Samoa, is noted for its distinctive and highly decorated pottery. For areas beyond the Solomons, Lapita represents the culture of the first human inhabitants of the region. It is thus ancestral to Polynesian cultures, and much of Island Melanesian and Micronesian cultures as well. So a new Lapita site is always an exciting find. An ANU team and New Zealand team, led by Prof. Spriggs excavated at the site in July and August 2004 to see what remained after the bulldozers had left. Luckily the earliest part of the site was largely intact but even more remarkable was the finding that the earliest use of

the site was as a cemetery dating to about 3000 years ago, the earliest cemetery site found in the Pacific Islands.

More remarkable were the burial rites, with the bodies buried in various positions, including face-down. The heads of all adult burials had been removed some time after burial and placed elsewhere. Exquisitely decorated Lapita pottery had been cattered in the burial pits, and when the heads had been removed they had been replaced with shell arm rings. On almost the last day the body of an old man was found with bad arthritis and a broken leg that had healed in life, leaving him with a pronounced limp. He too had no head, but on his chest in a stone box were three skulls. What this all means in the context of Pacific archaeology will be explained by Prof. Spriggs.



*Matthew Spriggs is Professor of Archaeology and Director of the Centre for Archaeological Research (CAR) at ANU. He has been working in the Pacific and Island Southeast Asia for the last 29 years and has published extensively on his research.*

Please join us afterwards for light supper and a chat – find out how ‘down to earth’ archaeologists really are.

**All welcome, entry is by gold coin donation at the door.**

# Welcome to 2005 with CAS!

by

**Sylvia Schaffarczyk** CAS President

This year we have a new look newsletter, and a brand new functioning website! Our easy to follow and very tasteful website is being designed and managed by CAS member Denise Sutherland. It's launch date is: Wednesday the 16th of February, so you'll be able to access it then. Thank you so much Denise! The website has an archive of our newsletters, links to archaeologically interesting pages, and other helpful info. It will soon have the photo gallery promised during last year (sorry 'bout that), so if you have anything to contribute, please email us on the new CAS email.

Our newsletter editor for this year is Richard Hekimian, Adobe master-extraordinaire! If you have something archaeological to say – whether it's an anecdote from an excavation, photos of a CAS event past or present, or just an ad for something like field work opportunities, please forward info to Richard for inclusion in the newsletter.

Kristie Martin is our public relations officer, so she's the person to contact if you want to join up, need info about an event, or just want to know more about CAS.

I will introduce the other members of our committee over the next few issues of Old News. Meanwhile, I'm your president for this year. I'm a PhD student

with the school of archaeology and anthropology, and can be found there most days. Feel free to contact me on email: [sylvia.schaffarczyk@anu.edu.au](mailto:sylvia.schaffarczyk@anu.edu.au) if you have questions or suggestions for CAS, and I'll see what we can do. Meanwhile, if you are interested in becoming the CAS secretary, it's not a lot of effort for huge rewards – see me at the meeting, or email.

We have a number of fieldtrips this year, with dates to be notified soon. The trips include a visit to the South Coast, Joadja and Berrima in the southern highlands, and Cowra Creek mining site...so stay tuned!

Last but not least, Sam MacKay is continuing to work hard on the Ashbrooke site report – thank you to those of you who volunteered last year with the field surveys. This year Sam needs help with the 'inside work'. She has a list of archival material and library work that needs to be done, so if you have a bit of free time, want to contribute to a CAS project and have an interest in the local area, send CAS an email, and we can put you in touch with her.

The 16th of February is not only our first meeting of the year, with a presentation by Prof Matthew Spriggs, but is the ANU O-Week Market Day. We will have a stall where members can renew membership, and new students can join up. This year, we have a special market day only rate on student memberships of \$10. So renew on the day!

Sylvia Schaffarczyk  
CAS President 2005.

## CANBERRA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Canberra Archaeological Society was formed in 1963 to cater for the needs of all people interested in archaeology. The Society holds monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of each month (Feb to Nov). Meetings are held in lecture theatre 6 of the Manning Clark Theatres at 7.30pm.

### Membership Application 2005 – Canberra Archaeological Society

Name(s):

Address:

Phone:

Email (if you wish to receive society announcements):

Circle YES to receive your newsletter via email

Please circle membership type:

**Family \$40    Single \$30    Concession \$20**

Please return membership form with payment to:

**The Treasurer, Canberra Archaeological Society  
LPO Box A86  
Australian National University  
Canberra ACT 2601**

Cheques should be made payable to: **CANBERRA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.**

## Call for contributions

We've had a few articles written by CAS members for Old News...have you got something archaeologically interesting to say? An anecdote? A joke!?...contact the editor at the details below....seriously, this is your newsletter, and it can only be as interesting as you make it!

## Ad Space

Got anything archaeological to advertise? If you know of, or are running fieldwork this year and you need volunteers, or you want to volunteer for work, then drop us a line, and we'll advertise it for you in Old News. Websites and archaeological events are also welcome!

<b>2005 CAS COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS</b>		
President	Sylvia Schaffarczyk	sylvia.schaffarczyk@anu.edu.au C/- School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU ACT 0200
Treasurer	Peter White	(02) 62589354 pkwhite@netspeed.com.au
Vice-President	Graham Connah	graham.connah@effect.net.au (02) 6288 9105
Secretary	It could be you!	Join now! See the world!
Public Relations Officer	Kristie Martin	Ph: 62369343 or 0403632443
Webmaster	Denise Sutherland	
Newsletter Editor	Richard Hekimain	u3172184@anu.edu.au Ph: 0417 417 139
Members	Mavis Fowler	Bob Legge
CAS E-mail	contact@cas.asn.au	
CAS Web page	www.cas.asn.au	

## **Canberra Archaeological Society: Annual General Meeting, held at the Australian National University, 7.30 PM, 17 November 2004**

### **President's Report**

by

**Graham Connah** CAS President 2004

The 41st year of this Society can hardly be said to have been its easiest. It started well enough with fair attendances at its lectures and a successful fieldtrip to the ANU's excavations at Kiandra, where we were shown around by Ian Farrington and Lyndsay Smith, to whom our thanks are due. Later in the year Ladislav Nejman ran another fieldtrip to sites on the South Coast and most recently he ran a very ambitious one to Lake Mungo, in which over 20 people participated. I would like to extend our thanks to Lad for his efforts with these fieldtrips, which were amongst our more successful activities during the year. However, attendance at the lectures became poor during the winter months and only picked up again in October after very low numbers in July, August and September. This was disappointing because our lectures provide a wide selection of archaeological topics and topics relevant to archaeology and all our speakers spend time

and effort in preparing them. Inevitably, if speakers find themselves talking to such small audiences, it will become more difficult for the Society to find lecturers in the future. In the case of this year the situation was also compounded by the out-of-town absence of several committee members for substantial periods and we are particularly indebted to those who held the fort in their absence, particularly to Bob Legge who, with some difficulty, produced the 'Newsletter' for two months and looked after the meeting suppers as well. Previous to that Mavis Fowler had generously given her time to organize the suppers. In respect of the 'Newsletter' during the rest of the year, I think that it is most important that we thank Sylvia Schaffarczyk for her editorial work, which has been carried out in spite of heavy commitments to her own studies. Also coming to the Society's rescue on more than one occasion has been Marilyn Folger, to whom our thanks are due. Perhaps she will relent her previous decision and return to the Society's committee, we certainly need her.

As in previous years, it is also necessary to thank the School of Archaeology and Anthropology for its continued sponsorship of the Society and to thank Sue Fraser in the School for her frequent assistance with Society affairs. We have to pay the University for the use of its lecture theatre for our meetings and half of that cost is met by the School and half by ourselves. This is why we continue to have a gold-coin collection at each meeting, because the number of subscription-paying members of the Society remains very small.

However, in spite of the concern I have just expressed about attendances at lectures, I think that the Treasurer will shortly tell us that the Society remains financially modestly healthy and we very much appreciate his efforts in this respect. Most often when organizations like ours suffer from failing interest, there is a financial crisis as a result, but this is not the case with our Society and for this reason I am more optimistic about the future than might sometimes appear to be the case. Certainly there is no necessity at the moment to increase the subscription to the Society.

As I have already indicated in the 'Newsletter', I would be very relieved to pass the Presidency of the Society on to someone else and to share some of the work of finding speakers, having now arranged 40 of them over the last four years. Matthew Spriggs, Peter White of Sydney University, and Michael Pearson are people with whom I am already negotiating for 2005 and I hope that Sylvia Schaffarczyk will assist me in getting together the programme for the coming year. However, I have to present a paper at a conference in Britain in January and, having just published a new book in August this year, I have another overseas publisher's deadline to meet by the end of next year. In short, this brings me to the subject of the elections that we will shortly hold for next year's officers and committee. Even allowing for some present participants agreeing to continue, we are at least in need of a new President and a new Secretary, that latter position being perhaps the most important one in a Society of this character. I am fully aware how busy everybody is these days but I do hope that we can fill these and the other positions with members who will commit themselves to the support of as broad a spectrum of the Society's activities as possible. I would also respectfully remind

you that both those nominating and those voting at this meeting should be paid-up members of the Society. However, should this not be the case in any instance then I am sure that the Treasurer will be more than happy to take payment before we proceed further, and to count it as a 2005 subscription.

I have a deeply engrained conviction that societies like the Canberra Archaeological Society remain important because they provide a meeting point for people of similar interests and, in our case, particularly between students and experienced archaeologists, between university people and non-university people, and between professionals and non-professionals. There are some people who clearly doubt this and who make it apparent by not supporting the Society but I suspect that history could prove them wrong in the long term. I have just recorded a lecture on a CD for the December meeting of a local history society in the north of England of which I was long ago a member. That society has been going for over 72 years and an archaeological society in the same area for over 150 years. Indeed, the whole idea of people with similar interests, whatever they might be, banding together into groups providing mutual benefits and stimulation is very old indeed. At least as early as the Hellenistic Period, some 2000 years ago, such organizations already existed. I would doubt very much that we are going to see the end of them in our time. So, in conclusion, might I wish us all a very pleasant Christmas and the Society a successful New Year, for many years to come.

## 2005 Lecture Series

Date	Speaker	Title
16 Feb	Matthew Spriggs	Teouma (Vanuatu): The Oldest Pacific Island Cemetery and its missing heads
16 March	TBA	TBA
20 April	Mike Austin	Environmental catastrophes: new lessons from history?
18 May	Andrew Fairbairn	Çatalhöyük and Pýnarbaþý: Windows on the origins of agriculture in Turkey
15 June	Ralph Sutherland	TBA
20 July	Peter White	Axes and Are: Stone tools of the duna and their implications
17 August	Kim Owens	Farmers, Fishers and Whalemen: The settlement landscape of Lord Howe Island
21 September	Kath Szabo	The Ebb and flow of tradition in an island world: Shell beads in island Southeast Asia
19 October	Richard Hekimian	The Duntroon Dairy
16 November	Peter Dowling	Archaeology and the ANZACs