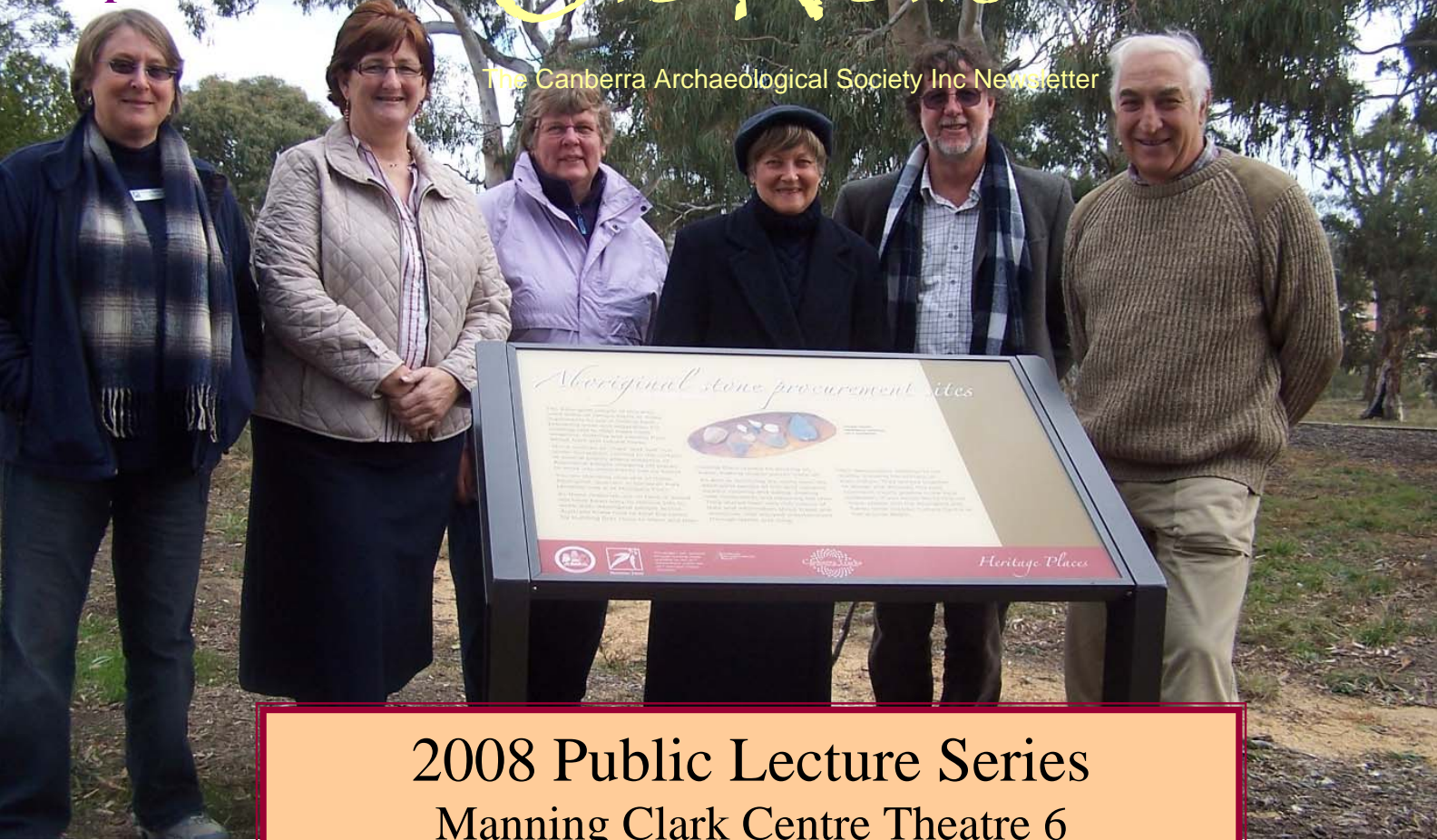


September 2008

# Old News

The Canberra Archaeological Society Inc Newsletter



2008 Public Lecture Series  
Manning Clark Centre Theatre 6  
7:30pm Wednesday 17 September

## THE FLORES HOBBIT

### PROFESSOR COLIN GROVES

The discovery of *Homo floresiensis* (known as the Hobbit) through excavations at Liang Bua was initially so surprising that there was a widespread refusal to accept its validity -- there were numerous claims that the type specimen was some kind of pathologically deformed modern person. These claims recall the similar wild-eyed objections that have greeted almost every major discovery in palaeoanthropology, and have somewhat overshadowed the scientific discussions about the affinities of *Homo floresiensis*.

I will discuss this question and its bearing on our understanding of the dispersals and biogeography of proto-humans, after describing significant features of the species' skeleton and dentition, and its inferred functional anatomy.

**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.**



## Biographical notes



Colin at Sonso

My work has concerned mostly mammalian taxonomy (especially Primates), but I have from time to time enjoyed fieldwork in habitat countries, studying primates or other mammals. Sadly, conservation has had to be an increasingly urgent theme in my work.

Some of my other research has been in evolution, especially human evolution, and I have more and more felt it necessary to counter the anti-evolutionary nonsense put out by creationists - some of it simplistic and ill-informed, some of it actually malicious. It is necessary to combat this and other pseudosciences, not merely because it is wrong, but especially because, if taught in schools or widely promoted to the general public, it gives the impression that science is not a method of finding out, but a way to bolster up ones prejudices.

## 2008 Activities List

Date	Venue	Speaker	Topic
Wednesday October 15	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Rupert Gerritsen	Ship wrecks off the WA coast
AGM Wednesday November 19	Manning Clarke Theatre 6	Tony Barham	Tsunami impacts on WA coastal archaeology
Sunday November 23 11am - 3pm	Crinigans Stone Hut, Wanderer Ct, Amaroo, ACT	Family fun day	to open the new interpretive sign and commemorate the early settlers of Ginninderra.

CAS 2008 Committee Contact Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>President:</b> Helen Cooke - <a href="mailto:the.cookies@bigpond.com">the.cookies@bigpond.com</a> mobile: 0408 443 243</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vice President:</b> Bob Legge <a href="mailto:kopicup@hotmail.com">kopicup@hotmail.com</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Treasurer:</b> Wendy Lees (Katarina is on leave).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Secretary:</b> Sue Aylen - <a href="mailto:sueaylen@dodo.com.au">sueaylen@dodo.com.au</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Membership Secretary:</b> Wendy Lees <a href="mailto:lastlees5@hotmail.com">lastlees5@hotmail.com</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Committee Members:</b> Tegan Kelly, Laura Breen, Faye Powell</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Newsletter Editor:</b> Tegan Kelly – <a href="mailto:Tegan.kelly@anu.edu.au">Tegan.kelly@anu.edu.au</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Web Master:</b> Russell Kightley Media</li> </ul>



## More little people!

On March 12 this year a paper in *PloS One* by Lee Berger and colleagues claimed that Palau had been inhabited by very small people in prehistory, and that insular dwarfing was a potentially common scenario with stature reduction accompanied by a primitive skeletal morphology in the genus *Homo*. A joint US-ANU group disputes that Palau was inhabited by "little people" in prehistory and their response is published in *PLoS One*.

'Small-Bodied Humans from Palau, Micronesia' (Lee R. Berger, Steven E. Churchill, Bonita De Klerk, Rhonda L. Quinn)

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0001780>

'Small Scattered Fragments Do Not a Dwarf Make: Biological and Archaeological Data Indicate that Prehistoric Inhabitants of Palau Were Normal Sized' (Scott M. Fitzpatrick, Greg C. Nelson, Geoffrey Clark)

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0003015>

## Crinigan's Stone Hut ruin, Wanderer Court, Amaroo.

### Replanting the irises!

The area around the hut ruin is now beautifully landscaped and you can help to replace the original iris (flag lily) plants that were rescued before the walls were stabilised some years ago.

Please contact Marilyn Folger at [folger@netspeed.com.au](mailto:folger@netspeed.com.au) if you can help on **Sunday September 14 at 1pm.**

Don't forget the **Family Fun Day, Sunday 23 November, 11 am to 3pm.**

CAS invites you to come and enjoy the day and the attractions – bush band, dancers, sausage sizzle and displays of some of the artefacts from the site. Bring your family and friends.

CAS Committee members Faye and Sue are planning the day and welcome any ideas for activities and introductions for publicity. Please contact Faye at [powell@velocitynet.com.au](mailto:powell@velocitynet.com.au) if you can help with ideas and/or on the day.

Invitations will be sent out closer to the day when activities have been confirmed.



## Lectures and talks

A Public Lecture in support of the Friends of the Classics Museum  
at The Australian National University

### IN PURSUIT OF ALEXANDER

Lecture by Marilyn Dooley  
Photographs by David Campbell

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September, 8pm, Haydon-Allen Tank ANU \$5 donation**  
**(Supper will be served in the Museum after the lecture)**

From late April to early June this year, three committee members from the Friends of the ANU Classics Museum, together with a small group of fellow travellers, journeyed through Greece, Turkey and Egypt, by plane, bus, train, boat and on foot, to sites associated with Alexander the Great (356 – 323 BCE).

The (ANU) Canberra Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens and  
the Embassy of the Republic of Greece  
cordially invite you to a lecture presented by Professor Tom Hillard  
of Macquarie University  
in honour of  
Professor Alexander Cambitoglou AO, Founder and Director of the AAIA  
on  
**Sunday, 7 September 2008** at 4:00pm in the Apollo Room, Hellenic Club of Canberra,  
with canapes and Greek wines to follow,  
courtesy of His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece

## Joke O' the Week

Archaeologists in Britain found part of an ancient door this week.

It had a stone hinge on it.

*Sign in an Egyptian funeral parlour: Satisfaction guaranteed or your mummy back.*



Nicolas Rothwell's article about the **2008 ADE Archaeological Trek in the Simpson Desert** appeared in the Weekend Australian on August 16th.

The story, plus additional slideshows and video footage with commentary, can also be viewed on the newspapers website: [www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24129613-5013571,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24129613-5013571,00.html)

Dr Mike Smith FAHA FSA  
Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia

### An excellent article and well worth reading

The first twenty years of the history of Albert Hall by Dr Lenore Coltheart, Vice President of The Friends, in the August issue of the Canberra and District Historical Society journal. This is the first article in a two part series, with another to follow in a later edition about the more recent period of Albert Hall's history. Dr Coltheart has drawn for her article on the many wonderful stories that The Friends gathered at the time of the Albert Hall's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Copies of the journal can be obtained by contacting Canberra & District Historical Society, Curtin Place, Curtin, PO Box 315, Curtin ACT 2605 (webpage [www.canberrahistory.org.au](http://www.canberrahistory.org.au)) or by visiting the shop: opening hours - Tuesday and Wednesday 11am - 5pm; Saturday 10am - 12noon, or by contacting the Society's Administrator, Helen Digan at [admin@canberrahistory.org.au](mailto:admin@canberrahistory.org.au) or telephone 02 6281 2929.

## Conferences

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### AIMA/AHSA/AAMH Conference

**Archaeology from Below: Engaging the Public**

**Adelaide, South Australia — September 24-27, 2008**

**Venue: State Library of South Australia**

Workshops are open for registration through the workshop organisers. See the conference website for more information: <http://www.aima.iinet.net.au/frames/aimavtframe.html>

### **2008 Australasian Society for Human Biology (ASHB) Conference**

**Theme: The Scope of Human Biology in Australasia**

**St. Mark's College, Adelaide, 10-12 December.**

Last year's conference contained a vast array of papers from anthropology and archaeology students and academics covering many areas of human and primate behaviour, modification, evolution and identification. Accommodation and meals are available on site. See: <http://school.anhb.uwa.edu.au/ashb/currentconference.html>



**Australian Archaeological Association Conference**  
**Noosa, Queensland. December 2008**

Online registration is now available for the Australian Archaeological Association Conference 2008. Earlybird registration fees will apply until 14 September, so don't leave it too long before you book your place.

Online booking and other information about the AAA Conference can be accessed at the web link below: <http://www.socialscience.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=74856>

The provisional list of session proposals has been posted on the AAA conference website, and can be accessed at:  
<http://www.socialscience.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=84360&pid=74856>

Heritage in Asia: Converging Forces and Conflicting Values, an International Conference,  
08-10th January 2009 Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Abstract Deadline: 01 September 2008

Organisers: Dr Patrick Daly ([aripd@nus.edu.sg](mailto:aripd@nus.edu.sg))  
Dr Tim Winter ([tim.winter@usyd.edu.au](mailto:tim.winter@usyd.edu.au))

## Exhibition:

**Gods, ghosts and men: Pacific arts from the National Gallery of Australia, 'the first major exhibition of Pacific art to be held in Australia for nearly 20 years'**

From 10 Oct. 2008 -11 January 2009, at The National Gallery of Australia:  
<http://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/DEFAULT.cfm#Future>

There are a number of associated lectures (mostly at 12.45 pm), performances, and workshops etc. see <http://nga.gov.au/calendar>



## Book worms

### **Dreamtime Superhighway: Sydney Basin Rock Art and Prehistoric Information Exchange**

Jo McDonald, Terra Australis 27, Published August 2008

[http://epress.anu.edu.au/terra\\_australis/ta27/pdf\\_instructions.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/terra_australis/ta27/pdf_instructions.html)

“DREAMTIME SUPERHIGHWAY presents a thorough and original contextualization of the rock art and archaeology of the Sydney Basin. By combining excavation results with rock art analysis it demonstrates that a true archaeology of rock art can provide insights into rock art image-making in people's social and cultural lives. Based on a PhD dissertation, this monograph is a significantly revised and updated study which draws forcefully on rich and new data from extensive recent research - much of it by McDonald herself. McDonald has developed a model that suggests that visual culture - such as rock artmaking and its images and forms - could be understood as a system of communication, as a way of signaling group identifying behaviour. For the archaeologist of art, the anthropologist of art and those of us who try to think about past worlds ... this monograph is a must read.”

*New From Left Coast Press, Inc. A 15% discount on web orders at [www.LCoastPress.com](http://www.LCoastPress.com).*

#### ***American Industrial Archaeology: A Field Guide***

Douglas C. McVarish

July 2008, 360 pages, \$49.95 paper

#### ***Belief in the Past: Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion***

Edited by David S. Whitley and Kelley Hays-Gilpin

July 2008, 288 pages, \$29.95 paper

#### ***Handbook of Landscape Archaeology***

Edited by Bruno David and Julian Thomas

June 2008, 800 pages, \$129.00 cloth

To order, visit our website at

<http://lcoastpress.com/book.php?id=135>

ISBN: 978-1-59874-098-1 (c); 978-1-59874-099-8 (p)

#### **PRICE:**

\$99.00 (U.S./Canadian), £52.99 (Paper)

\$49.95 (U.S./Canadian), £25.99 (Paper)

For more information, contact Caryn Berg at [archaeology@LCoastPress.com](mailto:archaeology@LCoastPress.com)



### **The Roth Family, Anthropology, and Colonial Administration**

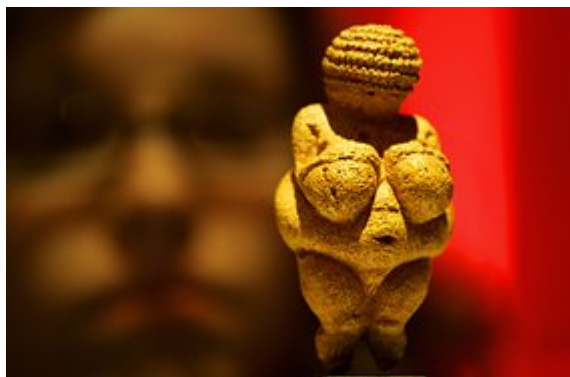
Russell McDougall, Iain Davidson (eds)  
2008 Institute of Archaeology, University College London/Left Coast Press

No family better represents the overlapping roles of administrator and scientist in the British Empire than the Roths. Descended from a Hungarian emigrant to Austria, two generations of Roths served the empire on four continents and, at the same time, produced ethnographic, archaeological, and linguistic studies that form the basis for much modern research.

This volume assesses the often-conflicting roles and contributions of the Roths as government servants and anthropologists. Most of the volume deals with Walter E. Roth, who developed foundational studies of both the Australian Aborigines—considered to be among the first systematic ethnographies anywhere—and South American tribes while serving as Chief Protector of Aborigines in Queensland and later medical officer, magistrate, museum curator and indigenous relations officer in British Guyana. Henry Ling Roth's contributions to the anthropology of Tasmania, Benin, Sarawak, and New Zealand are also enumerated, as are the publications and administrative activities of the succeeding generation of Roths. This volume serves the reader as a family biography, a slice of the English colonial history, and an important introduction to the history of anthropology.

<http://www.lcoastpress.com/book.php?id=60>

## **25,000yo Venus of Willendorf celebrated**



**A woman looks at the Venus of Willendorf sculpture.** (AFP: Norbert Millauer)

Plump and 25,000 years old, the Venus of Willendorf remains a mystery even after 100 years in the limelight.

The small ochre-coloured figurine from the Palaeolithic period takes her name from the village in northern Austria where she was excavated on August 7, 1908 by three palaeontologists.



"This was the first statuette [from this period] that had such detailed features and it was also the first statuette to be discovered at the time on an archaeological site," said Walpurga Antl-Weiser, head of the prehistory section at Vienna's Natural History Museum.

On the 100th anniversary of her excavation, Venus is being honoured with a special exhibition at the museum.

Carved from oolitic limestone, she is a round woman standing with her arms resting on her breasts and belly, her bowed head hiding her face, but showing off elaborate hair.

"This statue is really remarkable and when you look at the way she was carved, the way the muscles and different parts of the body are rendered, you can tell the sculptor used a model," said Ms Antl-Weiser.

"[This Venus] resulted from perfect observation of the human body, but she was also arranged to make her curves more harmonious," she said.

The first and only statuette of her kind before the French Venus of Lespugue and the Russian Venus of Kostienki joined her two decades later, the lady from Willendorf still attracts crowds.

"I think a lot of visitors come to the museum just to see the Venus," said Mr Antl-Weiser.

But where she came from and whether she represented a goddess or women's elevated place in society remains a mystery.

"We don't think she represented prehistoric women," said Ms Antl-Weiser.

"She's a rather older woman, one who has certainly already had children.

"Moreover, we can't prove that women played a predominant role during this period and that these female statuettes honoured them. There are many other statuettes [from that period] representing animals, part-humans and part-animals or asexual human beings."

Rather than being a goddess, the Venus of Willendorf could have been part of a ritual or a belief shared by several tribes over 20,000 years ago.

Although excavated at opposite ends of the continent, the French and Russian venuses are similar in form to their Austrian sister.

"They could have been expressions of a single belief that spread through Europe," said Ms Antl-Weiser.

But this does not explain where the lady from Willendorf came from.

While other artefacts and statuettes were excavated near the same village in lower Austria, no traces remain of the rock out of which she was carved.

Ms Antl-Weiser concludes: "From that point of view, either the Venus was brought here, or the rock fragments disappeared when a railroad was built there in the 19th century."