Fieldwork in the Namadgi Ranges

Archaeological work in the Namadgi Ranges around Canberra is continuing as part of Fenja Theden-Ringl's PhD project into the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental histories of the region. Seven rock shelters have been excavated since last October, distributed from Wee Jasper in the north to the southern tip of the ACT. The excavations have involved dozens of postgraduate and undergraduate students from the Archaeology and Natural History and the Archaeology and Anthropology departments of the ANU as well as interested researchers and locals. With work likely to continue into May, volunteers are always most welcome!

Email: fenja.theden-ringl@anu.edu.au
Recent Publications


Dr. Hsiao-chun Hung returns to the Mariana Islands

In February-March 2013, Hsiao-chun Hung and Mike Carson returned to the Mariana Islands in far western Micronesia, searching for more evidence of the oldest human habitation at the House of Taga Site, ca. 3500-3400 BP.

Following on their 2011 field-work, they uncovered more than 90 sq m of a very well preserved habitation layer, very dense with artefacts and midden, as well as arrangements of post-holes and other structural features. This work confirms that the very first inhabitants in the Marianas made red-slipped pottery of various forms with or without carination, including hundreds of decorated pieces that appeared from the earliest deposit of this site.

This excavation produced the largest so far known collection of decorated red-slipped pottery in the Marianas, with beautifully dentate-stamped designs highlighted by white lime in-fill. Some early pottery with painting was noticed, too! Certainly, the large amount of decorated pottery can help us to understand more about cross-regional relations.

Thanks are due to the funding sources, including both Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation and Australian Research Council. Strong support from local scholars and authorities graciously made this project gain fruitful results. The preliminary results have been invited for presentation at several locations, such as at Archaeology Center of Stanford University (USA) and Northern Mariana Humanities Council (Saipan), as well as featured in media such as Radio Australia News and Archaeology Magazine’s top news story on 14 March 2013.

In Other News

It is a pleasure to announce that Dr. Julien Louys who is currently a post doc at the University of Queensland and Stuart Hawkins who is a PhD candidate in ANH will be joining the Department as Post-doctoral Fellows in July 2013 on the ARC Laureate project ‘From Sunda to Sahul: Understanding Modern Human Dispersal, Adaptation and Behaviour en Route to Australia’. These appointments are for 5 years and involve field research throughout Island Southeast Asia.

The ANU library is interested in digitizing old Terra Australis and other ANH (and predecessor organizations) publications. Publications will be put online, and accessible in the DSpace. The department has donated a copy of each TA we have available but there are a number missing. If you have any ANH publications that you are willing to donate for digitisation please contact Dr. Jack Fenner, jack.fenner@anu.edu.au

Congratulations also to ANH’s Dr. Matthew Prebble who from February 1st was appointed acting Convener, for the Masters of Archaeological Science Program, CASS, ANU. Dr Prebble has been involved in the Program in the past, teaching of the Vanuatu Field School for the program in 2012. Well done Matt!
Professor Judith Cameron presents at the Vatican

At the invitation of Professor Santamaria, Chief Scientist at the Vatican, Judith Cameron presented a paper on prehistoric textiles in Southeast Asia to archaeologists and conservators at the Vatican Museum on January 28th, 2013. Excavations of burial beneath the Necropolis had produced large fragments of woven asbestos cloth and such finds are exceptionally rare. Prof. Santamaria had read Judith’s paper ‘Asbestos Cloth and Elites in Southeast Asia’ published in 2000 in the Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association 2000 19: 47-51 and was interested in archaeological parallels. Judith is currently investigating asbestos fibres from Kamrej in India with Sunil Gupta and tiny fragments from Batujaya, a 2nd century temple site in West Java as part of The Archaeology of Batujaya Project by Prof. Pierre-Yves Manguin (EFEO) and the Urasan Arkeologi Nasional (Indonesia). Her new collaboration with the Vatican Museum dovetails well into Judith’s Future Fellowship which is concerned with long-distance interaction in Southeast Asia.

Dr Xaiyun Xiao returns to China

Dr Xaiyun Xiao (Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology, Chinese Academy of Sciences) has been a visiting fellow at ANH for the last 3 months, working with Simon Haberle to develop a collaborative research program between ANH and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Nanjing. During her stay she was able to take part in fieldwork in southern NSW (Bega Swamp) and has prepared two significant manuscripts on the last 20,000 years of environmental change in Yunnan Province for publication. We look forward to ongoing collaboration in the future.
Pollen are routinely used to understand palaeoecological change yet there remains knowledge gaps regarding how modern pollen rain relates to different landscape settings and to different climatic regions. A new study funded through ACEAS (Australian Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis) will provide important information on the relationship of land cover changes associated with urbanization and rural land management. We know that pollen assemblages can provide a very cost-effective measure perspective of landscape phenological patterns, including identification of invasive allergenic species. We can also gain insights into how these are driven by current climate patterns and potentially map the influence of future climates on pollen production. Expanding urbanization and climate change are likely influences of aerobiological distribution of allergenic pollens. It is likely that the relative distribution of pollen from clinically important species, will be affected by changes in temperature, precipitation and CO2 concentrations associated with climate change.

Simon Haberle attended the first workshop of the working group for “Australian aerobiology to monitor environmental change” met on Stradbroke Island on 11-15 March 2013 to develop a framework for the establishment of a national pollen count monitoring program with the potential to assist with management of patients with allergic respiratory diseases such as hay fever and asthma that can be triggered by airborne pollens, particularly but not exclusively from grasses. The group included leaders in the measurement and analysis of pollens in Australia. This exciting multi-disciplinary team includes scientists and clinicians with expertise ecology, botany, archaeology, climate change science, allergy, immunology, public health and biostatistics. ANH has been involved in a number of aerobiology studies over the last decade in locations such as Darwin, Canberra, Hobart, Brisbane and even the Daintree Rainforest.

The working group hope to develop a strong case for funding to support ongoing monitoring of daily pollen counts in cities around Australia and New Zealand. More information on the working group and ACEAS can be found at http://www.aceas.org.au

ANH contributes to human health study

Pollen are routinely used to understand palaeoecological change yet there remains knowledge gaps regarding how modern pollen rain relates to different landscape settings and to different climatic regions. A new study funded through ACEAS (Australian Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis) will provide important information on the relationship of land cover changes associated with urbanization and rural land management. We know that pollen assemblages can provide a very cost-effective measure perspective of landscape phenological patterns, including identification of invasive allergenic species. We can also gain insights into how these are driven by current climate patterns and potentially map the influence of future climates on pollen production. Expanding urbanization and climate change are likely influences of aerobiological distribution of allergenic pollens. It is likely that the relative distribution of pollen from clinically important species, will be affected by changes in temperature, precipitation and CO2 concentrations associated with climate change.

Simon Haberle attended the first workshop of the working group for “Australian aerobiology to monitor environmental change” met on Stradbroke Island on 11-15 March 2013 to develop a framework for the establishment of a national pollen count monitoring program with the potential to assist with management of patients with allergic respiratory diseases such as hay fever and asthma that can be triggered by airborne pollens, particularly but not exclusively from grasses. The group included leaders in the measurement and analysis of pollens in Australia. This exciting multi-disciplinary team includes scientists and clinicians with expertise ecology, botany, archaeology, climate change science, allergy, immunology, public health and biostatistics. ANH has been involved in a number of aerobiology studies over the last decade in locations such as Darwin, Canberra, Hobart, Brisbane and even the Daintree Rainforest.

The working group hope to develop a strong case for funding to support ongoing monitoring of daily pollen counts in cities around Australia and New Zealand. More information on the working group and ACEAS can be found at http://www.aceas.org.au

The UC San Diego Library has recently completed a project to digitize and provide online access to fifty-two dissertations and theses which document anthropological (and related) research in Papua New Guinea. With one exception (Kenneth Read’s 1946 master’s thesis) the research was situated in the Highlands. This work was done with permission granted by the authors or their heirs. Funding was provided by the UC San Diego Library.

Access is through the Digital Library Collections at https://libraries.ucsd.edu/digital/ and the dissertations are easily found by browsing “By Collection/Library” and selecting “Papua New Guinea Highlands dissertations” under the “Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology”.

Links are also present in the records for individual titles in our library catalog (http://roger.ucsd.edu), most easily found by a keyword search on “Papua New Guinea Highlands Dissertations”. This project could not have happened without help from many people. Janel Kozlowski Fink managed the permission-seeking process. Roger Smith, Joaquim (Jack) Neves, Gabriela Montoya and Cristela Garcia-Spitz of the UC San Diego Library’s Digital Library Program coordinated the work of getting the scans made and a million other details. Hanley Cocks and Marilu Vallejo worked on creating catalog records for each title; Arwen Hutt ensured that these records were adapted for metadata describing the digital versions. All of the authors generously gave permission to include their works without restriction. Special thanks to scholars who supplied advice, contact information, missing pages, scans of original plates, loans of original typescripts, and other treasures: Chris Ballard, Philip Gibbs, Terrence Hays, Robin Hide, Allison Jablonko, Ragnar Johnson, Deveni Temu, Paige West, Polly Wiessner and many others. A huge thank you to everyone above—and apologies if anyone has been left off the list.

The UC San Diego Library has recently completed a project to digitize and provide online access to fifty-two dissertations and theses which document anthropological (and related) research in Papua New Guinea. With one exception (Kenneth Read’s 1946 master’s thesis) the research was situated in the Highlands. This work was done with permission granted by the authors or their heirs. Funding was provided by the UC San Diego Library.

Access is through the Digital Library Collections at https://libraries.ucsd.edu/digital/ and the dissertations are easily found by browsing “By Collection/Library” and selecting “Papua New Guinea Highlands dissertations” under the “Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology”.

Links are also present in the records for individual titles in our library catalog (http://roger.ucsd.edu), most easily found by a keyword search on “Papua New Guinea Highlands Dissertations”. This project could not have happened without help from many people. Janel Kozlowski Fink managed the permission-seeking process. Roger Smith, Joaquim (Jack) Neves, Gabriela Montoya and Cristela Garcia-Spitz of the UC San Diego Library’s Digital Library Program coordinated the work of getting the scans made and a million other details. Hanley Cocks and Marilu Vallejo worked on creating catalog records for each title; Arwen Hutt ensured that these records were adapted for metadata describing the digital versions. All of the authors generously gave permission to include their works without restriction. Special thanks to scholars who supplied advice, contact information, missing pages, scans of original plates, loans of original typescripts, and other treasures: Chris Ballard, Philip Gibbs, Terrence Hays, Robin Hide, Allison Jablonko, Ragnar Johnson, Deveni Temu, Paige West, Polly Wiessner and many others. A huge thank you to everyone above—and apologies if anyone has been left off the list.

The UC San Diego Library has recently completed a project to digitize and provide online access to fifty-two dissertations and theses which document anthropological (and related) research in Papua New Guinea. With one exception (Kenneth Read’s 1946 master’s thesis) the research was situated in the Highlands. This work was done with permission granted by the authors or their heirs. Funding was provided by the UC San Diego Library.

Access is through the Digital Library Collections at https://libraries.ucsd.edu/digital/ and the dissertations are easily found by browsing “By Collection/Library” and selecting “Papua New Guinea Highlands dissertations” under the “Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology”.

Links are also present in the records for individual titles in our library catalog (http://roger.ucsd.edu), most easily found by a keyword search on “Papua New Guinea Highlands Dissertations”. This project could not have happened without help from many people. Janel Kozlowski Fink managed the permission-seeking process. Roger Smith, Joaquim (Jack) Neves, Gabriela Montoya and Cristela Garcia-Spitz of the UC San Diego Library’s Digital Library Program coordinated the work of getting the scans made and a million other details. Hanley Cocks and Marilu Vallejo worked on creating catalog records for each title; Arwen Hutt ensured that these records were adapted for metadata describing the digital versions. All of the authors generously gave permission to include their works without restriction. Special thanks to scholars who supplied advice, contact information, missing pages, scans of original plates, loans of original typescripts, and other treasures: Chris Ballard, Philip Gibbs, Terrence Hays, Robin Hide, Allison Jablonko, Ragnar Johnson, Deveni Temu, Paige West, Polly Wiessner and many others. A huge thank you to everyone above—and apologies if anyone has been left off the list.
Upcoming Conferences

A Centenary of Celebrating heritage
Accessing, presenting and interpreting heritage places and their collections that have contributed to 100 years and more in Canberra and the region.

Hosted by Canberra Archaeological Society, National Trust of Australia (ACT) and Significance International with sponsors: Australia ICOMOS; Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage University of Canberra; and the Institute of Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts ANU.

When: Saturday 20th July 2013; time: 8.30am to 5pm.

Where: Sir Roland Wilson Building Theatre, Bldg 120, ANU campus.

Cost: $70 full, $50 members of the host organizations, $30 concession & full-time students - registration details will be available by the end of April 2013.

Call for presentations to be submitted by Friday 3 May 2013 to Helen.cooke@anu.edu.au.

The 2nd International Contact Rock Art Symposium
Contributors have been invited based on their experience researching and writing about contact rock art in their respective countries and also for their interest in moving contact rock art research away from purely description-based studies towards a more theoretically-grounded area of specialisation within rock art studies.

Our aims are:
1: To share international perspectives on rock art depicting/representing contact between different cultural groups.
2: To explore different approaches to the interpretation of contact rock art.
3: To highlight similarities, differences and themes in the nature of representing ‘contact’ in different parts of the world and at different times.
4: To discuss options for promoting the study and protection of contact rock art globally.

This symposium will include a field trip for presenters to meet local Aboriginal Traditional Owners and visit important contact rock art sites in Kakadu National Park and western Arnhem Land. For more information, contact Sally May (sally.may@anu.edu.au) or Ben Smith (benjamin.smith@uwa.edu.au)

When: 13-15 September 2013

Where: North Australia Research Unit (NARU), 23 Elengowan Drive, Brinkin (Darwin) NT 0810

Pictured: Christian Reepmeyer, Ella Ussher and Katherine Seikel
Canberra Archaeological Society & ANU Students Archaeological Association: Recording Significant sites in the Tuggeranong Valley

Daryl Wesley, Peter Dowling, Helen Cooke and Tristen Jones offer all ANU undergraduate students, CAS and CAR members the opportunity to participate in a day fieldtrip to record significant sites in the Tuggeranong Valley. The group will revisit known sites of culturally modified trees and artefact grinding grooves. Lab session outlining recording techniques and fieldwork safety briefing will take place on Friday 17 May, 2-3.30pm at Coombs (Building 9) Teaching Lab: 6002. Field survey will take place on Sunday 19 May, at 2 pm. For more information, or to RSVP please contact Helen Cooke on 0408 443 243 or email Helen.cooke@anu.edu.au

Lunchtime talks

The Department is still looking for presenters for ANH’s monthly “Lunch Time Talks”. If you are happy to informally present on any recent fieldwork or research activities please contact Dr. Janelle Stevenson, Janelle.stevenson@anu.edu.au

Upcoming Events ...

Canberra Archaeological Society Inaugural Welcome BBQ

The CAS Committee invites all CAS members and prospective members to join them on Friday 17 May 4pm, at the grassy BBQ area outside Coombs Building, near the Coombs Lecture Theatre for the inaugural welcome BBQ. Come and enjoy the free sausage sizzle, mingle with colleagues and catch up on all things archaeological in the Canberra region!

Deadline for 2013 Rhys Jones Fieldwork Scholarship application.

This scholarship is given annually upon competitive application to a postgraduate student at the ANU in the field of archaeology and palaeoanthropology in order to assist with fieldwork expenses above those available from their College funds. This year the closing date for applications is the 30th April 2013. Details of eligibility, selection criteria and application procedure can be requested via Simon.Harbottle@anu.edu.au

Canberra Archaeological Society & ANU Students Archaeological Association: Recording Significant sites in the Tuggeranong Valley

Daryl Wesley, Peter Dowling, Helen Cooke and Tristen Jones offer all ANU undergraduate students, CAS and CAR members the opportunity to participate in a day fieldtrip to record significant sites in the Tuggeranong Valley. The group will revisit known sites of culturally modified trees and artefact grinding grooves. Lab session outlining recording techniques and fieldwork safety briefing will take place on Friday 17 May, 2 - 3.30pm at Coombs (Building 9) Teaching Lab: 6002. Field survey will take place on Sunday 19 May, at 2 pm. For more information, or to RSVP please contact Helen Cooke on 0408 443 243 or email Helen.cooke@anu.edu.au

Lunchtime talks

The Department is still looking for presenters for ANH’s monthly “Lunch Time Talks”. If you are happy to informally present on any recent fieldwork or research activities please contact Dr. Janelle Stevenson, Janelle.stevenson@anu.edu.au

Morning Tea

Also for all department members who haven’t yet signed up to host a morning tea this year, please sign up on the noticeboard in the tea room. We have still have free spots from September through to December!

Research in Archaeology and Natural History at the ANU School of Culture, History and Language aims to understand prehistoric human societies, the environments in which they developed and the environmental consequences of human presence. Departmental research ranges from southeast Asia and the Pacific, through the tropical forests of New Guinea and the savannahs of Australia, to the islands of Oceania.

Field research in ANH is supported by well-equipped laboratories that were fully updated and refurbished during 2009. Our laboratories support research into prehistoric textiles, archaeobotanical remains, rock art, prehistoric environments, zoological material and ceramics. ANH houses the largest pollen reference collection in Australia, as well as plant, bone, shell and ceramic collections. We also have access to world-class ANU facilities for archaeological dating, stable isotope analysis, and electron microscopy.