

R.S. SMITH

## TOWNSVILLE EXCAVATIONS

Dr. Macainsh has omitted to mention the celebrated and succinct Stuart shards. These mysterious fragments were unearthed as recently as 1975 by a taipan trapper. He quite literally stumbled upon them while tramping through the scrub. Carbon dating and infra-red photography seem to provide almost convincing evidence of two apparent facts. The first of these is that the shards are in the vicinity of 5000 years old. The second is that each of them bears the faint but unmistakable letters EH.

Credit for the detailed decipherment of these remarkable relics is due to Mr Arthur Askin, Archivist at the Aitkenvale Infirmary.

The full significance of this shattering find was first emphasized in a footnote to a lengthy article on North Queensland Excavations, under the banner "Tropical Treasure Trove". The article first appeared in *The Wulguru Worker* for 1st April 1975.

Such a stir did it create among archaeologists, anthropologists, and linguists, that it was reprinted in *The Cluden Courier* for 1st April 1976.

The provenance of the shards remains one of the great mysteries of the century. The likely theory has been advanced, however, that they may well be the remains, miraculously preserved, of primitive drinking vessels which scholars have long postulated as being the original Hic Cups.<sup>1</sup>

The discovery has also sparked off speculation about the likelihood of making similar finds from an even earlier date.

Unconfirmed reports from usually reliable sources suggest that Shenandoah Shards, Inc. may be interested in negotiating a lease on the lower slopes of Mt Louisa.

The scientific world remains in a simmer of excitement. Even the local scene is presently agog with expectation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lady Wishfort asking in 1700: "Dost take me for a fairy, to drink out of an EHcorn?"