

CURRENT QUEENSLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

By Mike Morwood and Iain Davidson

The Department of Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology has continued its extensive and intensive involvement in research, some of which concerns material from Queensland.

Graham Connah has published a major synthesis of the Archaeology of Australia's History (Of the Hut I Buildded, Cambridge University Press, Sydney 1988). Some of his earlier research into the application of aerial photography to Australian Archaeology (Aerial Archaeology 9) included photographs of Queensland sites.

Iain Davidson received ARC funding to continue his work in the Selwyn Ranges, south of Cloncurry, previously funded by the Heritage Commission through the DCSEA. This work is being undertaken jointly with Steve Sutton, who is investigating the prehistory of the region for his Ph.D. Other participants in the work include Nick Cook (UNE Geology Dept.), who is responsible for the geological aspects of the project. Excavations have been undertaken at Cuckadoo Rockshelter, where a non-basal date of 15,000 years has been obtained, as well as Cuckadoo 3 and Anvil Creek 1. Funding has also been received from the AIAS Rock Art Conservation Program for research into the conservation problems of art in these granite rockshelters. The ARC work will continue for three years from 1989.

Mike Morwood has gained an ARC grant for research on the archaeology of Aboriginal art in S.E. Cape York. Reconnaissance fieldwork and negotiations with Aboriginal communities at Laura and Hopevale has been undertaken, and two areas in the Laura and Cooktown regions have been selected for more detailed work. Over the next 3 years this will involve reconstruction of regional Aboriginal land-use patterns on the basis of environmental and ethnographic data, detailed assessment of the resource structure in selected areas, and excavations at a range of sites. This work follows on from Morwood's research in the upper Flinders River catchment. This year a final series of surveys completed this long-term project on the archaeology of the North Queensland Highlands. The research has involved excavations at a number of open and rockshelter sites north of Hughenden (e.g. Mickey Springs 34, Quippenburra Cave), as well as site and resource surveys in selected areas by researchers from a number of disciplines. Changes in resource-use, stone artefact technology and rock art over the last 10,000 years have been defined. Morwood has also continued his field work in both S.E. Queensland (Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society 53) and the North Queensland Highlands. He is also completing a general synthesis on the archaeology of rock art.

Peter Brown has just completed the preparation of a monograph concerned with Australian prehistoric skeletons for publication in Terra Australia. This work concentrates on his analysis of Coobool Creek, but includes a general review of Australian material. Peter has expanded his work with Chinese Homo erectus to include European and other specimens.

Wendy Beck has continued her work on the archaeology of plants, and her edited volume (with Anne Clarke and Lesley Head) on this subject will be published by Tempus in 1989 by the University of Queensland Anthropology Museum.

Jane Balme recently completed her Ph.D. thesis on western NSW with particular emphasis on the Pleistocene sites around the fossil lakes and channels of the Darling River.

Luke Godwin, now of NPWS in Parramatta, is reaching the final stages of his Ph.D. research on New England prehistory, with emphasis on the archaeology of the Gorge country and Tablelands.

Post-graduate Student Research

Mike Smith recently was awarded his Ph.D. for a thesis entitled "The pattern and timing of prehistoric settlement in Central Australia": the first Ph.D. from the Department. The early date for occupation of the arid zone have implications for western Queensland.

Steve Sutton has, since 1987, been engaged on Ph.D. research into the prehistory of the Mt. Isa area, north western Queensland. He is particularly interested in stone artefact technology with a view to documenting behavioural change, initiation of tribal boundaries and trade. His first papers on this work will appear in the proceedings of the Second New England Archaeological Symposium (on Stone Technology) to be published by British Archaeological Research.

Denise Donlon is writing up the results of the data collected on her research trip to China and the United States to study non-metrical characters in the postcranial skeleton. This work for her Ph.D. will discuss the distribution of such traits in human populations (including the Broadbeach material).

Su Solomon is continuing her research into taphonomy of bones from prehistoric sites in Australia. The work has included studies of Kangaroo butchery and disposal by modern kangaroo shooters. She is also studying the taphonomy of human crocodile victims using material from North Queensland and the Northern Territory. A paper with Iain Davidson, pointing out the implications for the interpretation of the fossil hominid remains from Olduvai Gorge, will appear in the volume arising from the First New England Archaeological Symposium (on Taphonomy) to be published by B.A.R.

Andrew Piper has been undertaking research into taphonomy of bones from historic sites in Australia. The work has included ethnoarchaeology of butchery on Queensland cattle stations. He is currently analyzing faunal remains from the Brisbane Government House and from his large-scale excavations at the Penal Colony on St. Helena Island, Moreton Bay.

Since 1983, there have been 13 Honours and 4 M.Litt. theses written in this Department. Those concerned specifically with aspects of Queensland archaeology are:-

Caroline Rola-Wojelechowski 1983 "A bit of Bundy: The Bundaberg engraving site". The Bundaberg (or South Kolan) engraving site was formerly located in the bed of the Barnett River, S.E. Queensland, but was inundated by construction of the Bundaberg Irrigational Barrage. However, it was first subject to a major recording and salvage project in 1971-72 by Kate Sutcliffe of the Queensland State Archaeology Branch. This thesis synthesizes the ethnography and history of this important art site, and presents a quantitative analysis of 1548 engravings recorded by tracing and photography.

Andrew Border 1985 "Unchartered waters: hunter-gatherer specialisation on the central Queensland coast". The research deals specifically with Aboriginal use of islands in the Broad Sound and Shoalwater Bay areas of the Central Queensland coast and includes the results of surveys on Marble Island and part of the Torilla Peninsula. Archaeological data is combined with information on resource character, distribution and seasonality, as well as ethnographic data, to reconstruct Aboriginal subsistence and settlement patterns.

Vanessa Edmonds 1986 "Subtropical rainforest: archaeological evidence of Aboriginal use in the Border Ranges, Southeast Queensland". This thesis examines ethnographic and archaeological evidence for Aboriginal use of subtropical rainforest areas in Southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales. The work included analysis of material from excavations at Bishop's Peak Rockshelter in the upper Albert River Valley.

Heather Bourke (now a tutor in the Department) **1987** "Quarries above ground: Australian historical archaeology and the cultural removal of materials". This thesis deals with research into site-formation processes on historical sites. General points are illustrated with many case studies including Totley Mine in North Queensland, and the original Maryborough township located west of present Maryborough City in S.E. Queensland.

Geoff Tanks 1987 "Illusions of diffusion: the distribution of maritime technology along the northeast Queensland coast". This thesis examines the distributions recorded for different types of fishhook, harpoon and outrigger canoe down the Queensland coast. It concludes that the distributions do not reflect the sequential introduction of technological variants, but are responses to identifiable physical, environmental and social factors.

Christine Burke 1988 "Faunal reflections of change and diversity: monitoring the effects of natural and cultural site formation processes on the composition of archaeological faunal assemblages, a case study from Boonah, Southeast Queensland". The title says it all.

The Department will introduce a Diploma of Archaeological Heritage in 1989. This is a postgraduate qualification available to graduates in any discipline who wish to gain an understanding of prehistoric and historical archaeology in Australia with particular emphasis on the management of sites and other aspects of public archaeology.