

Chapter 1 : An Archaeology of Australia Since by Susan Lawrence

*"An Archaeology of Australia since succeeds in presenting the broad-range of Australian historical archaeology and its contribution to understanding Australia's past. The authors are to be congratulated in undertaking such a task and setting the scene for the next decade of growth in the field.*

Each colony had a capital city which dominated that colony politically, economically and demographically. Fig. Until the gold rush of the s Sydney was the single most important colonial city, but from the second half of the nineteenth century its dominance was continually challenged by Melbourne. The capital of the new nation of Australia was a new city, Canberra, created specifically for the purpose, following the American model of Washington, DC. Canberra is located roughly halfway between the rival cities of Sydney and Melbourne in the Australian Capital Territory. The name Tasmania was adopted in , when transportation of convicts to the colony was abolished, in the hope that the new name would erase the memory of the convict association. The Northern Territory became a separate jurisdiction in after its separation from South Australia. All of the Australian colonies were established by the British, and thus most colonists were British, encompassing a mix of English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh and Cornish migrants in different proportions at different times for a variety of reasons. Being from Britain, most colonists and their Australian-born offspring were also white. African-Americans from the Caribbean were among the British subjects transported to the colonies as convicts, while other African-Americans along with Pacific Islanders and Azores Islanders came as crew on whaling ships. Significant groups of German settlers went to the eastern colonies in the s, and following the discovery of gold in the s large numbers of people, mainly men, came from southern China. Other European migrants included Poles, Swiss and Italians who also came and stayed as a result of the gold rush. From the s until the s this status was formally enshrined in the White Australia Policy, legislation explicitly intended to restrict and control non-white immigration. While united by colour, however, religion created a significant divide in Australian society until the s, with mainly Irish Catholics on one side and Protestants on the other. Australia on the World Stage The white settlement of Australia has been a quintessentially global, modern process. At every stage local developments have been facilitated by new international discoveries and inventions, and in turn events in Australia have played a role on the world stage, driving large-scale population movements, the international exchange of information and technology, and the production and distribution of commodities. However, while British colonisation was deeply embedded in global processes, the arrival of the British in did not suddenly liberate a lost continent. Australia has always been closely integrated with the world around it, even if this has not always been recognised by western Europeans. It has close neighbours in the Torres Strait Islands, New Guinea and the Indonesian archipelago and shares much with them in terms of their human, plant and animal populations. Through them Australia is linked directly to south-east Asia. The oceans that isolate Australia have always provided highways along which life has travelled, from the first plants and animals to the earliest human inhabitants and generations of subsequent visitors and settlers over the millennia. White settlement changed the primary focus of engagement from island south-east Asia to Western Europe and then North America and substantially Australia on the World Stage 7 increased the degree of external engagement, but these changes can be seen as part of a long continuum of human and natural history on this continent. The first Australians probably arrived here sometime between 40, and 60, years ago Flood Lower sea levels during the last glacial period meant that Papua New Guinea and Tasmania were then part of a larger southern continent called Sahul. The new arrivals nevertheless had to travel across kilometres of open sea to reach Australia, an extraordinary achievement and one that would not be equalled elsewhere for thousands of years. The best available evidence indicates that the ancestors of the Aborigines first spread around the coastal margins and up the inland rivers, reaching southern Tasmania around 36, years ago, before finally spreading across the dry interior of the continent. Aboriginal people developed a rich artistic and ritual life centred on the Dreaming, the stories that encoded law and tradition, with subsistence based on hunting and gathering. With some regional variation and alteration as population numbers increased and climatic conditions changed, this way of life was so successful that it

survived intact until white colonisation. By the time the British arrived in Australia they had extensive experience in dealing with indigenous people, gained in North America, India, the Caribbean, West Africa and elsewhere. Over years they had developed clear, if informal, guidelines on how land was to be acquired. Indigenous ownership of land was acknowledged, and it was expected that this land would have to be purchased, however duplicitously, if colonisation was to proceed. Land could be taken by conquest, but ultimately this was assumed to be more costly than outright purchase, and the latter was preferred. Contrary to this policy, the British government made a calculated decision that in Australia the land could simply be taken, and so the instructions issued to Governor Arthur Phillip for establishing the colony of New South Wales explicitly excluded any reference to purchasing land. The decision was made based on evidence about the Aboriginal people provided by the explorers James Cook and Joseph Banks, the only Englishmen to have visited the continent, and on evaluating that evidence against previous experience. According to Banks and Cook, Aboriginal people did not cultivate the land, making it difficult, but not impossible, for the British to recognise ownership, but equally importantly, they apparently did not understand trade, and therefore could not be negotiated with. Further, they were few in number and had no significant weapons so they did not constitute a military threat and would not be able to defend themselves. Australia was effectively empty, and the legal doctrine of terra nullius governed all subsequent acquisition of land on the continent. The property rights of Aboriginal people were not recognised and so they were dispossessed of their land. In the wholesale transfer of lands from indigenous to white ownership that was occurring all over the world at this time, global experience provided precedent, but local conditions dictated outcomes. Much of this book is the story of the exchange of people, plants, animals, ideas and goods between Australia and the rest of the world after 1788. While the historical figures and the sequence of local events may be unfamiliar to non-Australians, the broader context of exploration, industrialisation and colonisation are themes that were being played out in many parts of the world at the same time. Migration and the emergence of new societies and national identities, interactions between settlers and indigenous peoples, technology transfer and adaptation and environmental influences are all areas in which comparisons can be drawn between Australia and other white settler societies such as the United States, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. These show the closest parallels and may be the most illuminating, but there are also potential gains to be made from comparison with Hispanic societies in Central and South America and with parts of the world where Western hegemony was more successfully resisted such as the Islamic world, China and India. Settlement generally was a manifestation of broad global themes, but specific events also had very direct links to what was happening elsewhere. Both the beginning and the end of convict transportation, for example, were such events. Transportation to Australia began because of the American Revolution in 1776, when the 13 British colonies in North America severed ties with Britain, which had included the transportation of convicts. British authorities needed a new solution and they found it at Botany Bay. Transportation ended against the wishes of many settlers partly because of changes in penal reform philosophies in Britain, partly because of the Abolition or anti-slavery movement and partly because of the discovery of gold in California. In the 1850s and 1860s penal reformers wanted to see incarceration and closer supervision of prisoners in order to reform their behaviour, rather than punishing them with banishment and hard labour, and Australia was inappropriate in this new model. British Abolitionists agitating for the end of slavery in the United States saw uncomfortable parallels with the convict system and created an environment in which forced labour was no longer socially acceptable. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 was followed soon after by the discovery of gold in Australia, and as goldseekers rushed to the colonies, providing a free ticket for felons seemed like a poor deterrent to crime. The Australian gold rush that started in 1851 was thus another event with obvious links to events elsewhere. Many Australians had gone to California in search of gold, and the observant ones noticed similarities between the landscapes of California and Australia. These were rich surface alluvial finds and their discovery triggered an enormous gold rush that redistributed the existing population and drew hundreds of thousands of migrants from all over the world, fundamentally changing the direction of Australian history. While the gold rush was sparked by outside events, it also influenced events elsewhere. The most direct was in New Zealand, where experienced Australian diggers discovered gold at Otago on the South

Island in The rush there, while smaller than those in California and Australia on the World Stage 9 Australia, had a similar effect on migration, the economy and the course of New Zealand history. Discoveries around Australia in the s, s and s kept mining skills and gold fever alive for another generation, ultimately playing a role in the great South African and Klondike rushes at the end of the century. By the s the Australian continent was firmly British, but this was the result of decades of judicious planting of colonial outposts around the coast, directly stimulated by imperial ambition and frequently as counter-moves in response to actions by imperial rivals. Botany Bay was a convenient solution to the convict problem, but it also served to establish British territorial claims and encouraged trade to reinvigorate a British economy devastated by war with the American colonies Frost Captain James Cook, who charted the east coast of Australia in as part of his Pacific voyaging, was one of a long line of European explorers to the region. The first Europeans to see and record Australia were Dutch sailors who explored the Indian Ocean early in the seventeenth century. From Dirck Hartog and others charted the north and west coasts of the continent, and in Abel Tasman and his crew sailed further east, becoming the first Europeans to see Tasmania and New Zealand, and leaving Dutch names on the charts in their wake. Although Australia seemed to have little to offer them, the Dutch were a major force in south-east Asia at that time. The real power in the Pacific, however, was the Spanish Empire. Spain had claimed the Pacific in the Treaty of Tordesillas of , and while their main activity was further to the north in the Philippines, they also sent out exploration parties throughout Melanesia at the end of the sixteenth century and to Australia and the Pacific at the end of the eighteenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century Britain was ready to challenge the Spanish in the Pacific. Other settlements were also established around the coast to secure imperial interests. Renewed Dutch activity in south-east Asia following the end of the Napoleonic Wars prompted another burst of colonising activity Allen Various 10 1 Introduction outposts were established along the north coast at Melville Island and on the Cobourg Peninsula between and Unlike the southern settlements, however, which were intended as colonies, these were military establishments. They were placed in strategic locations to control the surrounding waterways, were fortified and were staffed almost exclusively with military personnel. The heat and humidity, however, made them inhospitable to the British and most were short-lived, being abandoned once British sovereignty had been established. Britain gradually outpaced its imperial rivals and colonial settlement continued to expand. The colony of New South Wales spread northwards to Moreton Bay Brisbane by , where the separate colony of Queensland was declared in A few years later, in , the colony of South Australia was established with its capital at Adelaide. The authorities eventually prevailed and the Port Phillip District was formed as an extension of New South Wales before being granted self-government as the colony of Victoria in Instead of spreading gradually outwards from the starting point of Sydney until the continent was filled, the British claimed the coastal fringe almost simultaneously, leaving a thin line of occupation along the shore with only limited use or exploration of the inland. As a consequence, the moving frontier that had such a dominant place in American history played a much smaller role in Australia. While external events and forces have influenced processes here, Australia has also been a laboratory for social experimentation, the results of which have been exported to the world. The convict system is probably the best-known example of this. From the beginning the Australian colonies were used to trial new philosophies of penal reform. One of the first model prisons built on the revolutionary plan of the radial penitentiary was constructed in Launceston in Casella The apparent success of Australian transportation encouraged French authorities to try a similar scheme, and when they set up their convict colony on New Caledonia in the Pacific they adopted many of the systems that had been in use in the Australian colonies Smith and Buckley Another area for experimentation was colonial settlement itself. Social reformer Edward Gibbon Wakefield had devised a colonisation scheme in which the carefully regulated sale of land would both fund further migration and create a society which replicated the English class system. Setting the sale price for land sufficiently high would restrict the number of landowners, while the assisted migrants would form a class of free labourers. British parliament approved of the scheme and established the colony of South Australia for Australia on the World Stage 11 its implementation. Despite this failure, authorities supported the establishment of similar Wakefieldian settlements in New Zealand. Democratic institutions were also established early in the Australian colonies, and their development later served as a

model for other countries to emulate. Universal male suffrage, for example, was achieved in in South Australia, in Victoria and in New South Wales, many years before it was established in Great Britain. Payment of parliamentary representatives was also established in Victoria in , which permitted working men to stand for office. In South Australia, women were granted the right to vote in local government elections as early as and to vote and stand for parliament in , one of the earliest jurisdictions in the world to achieve this. In the twentieth century Australian participation in a series of overseas wars further altered Australian perspectives at home and abroad. Although colonial troops had been sent to New Zealand in the s to fight in the war between Maori and British settlers and to Sudan in after the death of General Gordon at Khartoum, the first Australian troops to fight overseas were those sent to South Africa to fight in the South African Boer War of “ This was but a prelude to the First World War “ in which hundreds of thousands of Australian men enlisted. They served with distinction on the Western Front in France and Belgium, but for most Australians the First World War is most closely associated with the battle for Gallipoli, in Turkey. The enormous casualties brought home the realities of war to a country previously without experience of large-scale armed conflict, while the sense of British betrayal and abandonment contributed to an emerging sense of Australian nationalism and identity Chapter The Second World War “ also quickly entangled Australians as part of the Allied Forces, but for the first time it also saw Australia itself under direct threat. German ships patrolled the coastline, Japanese midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour and Japanese planes bombed northern Australia.

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*This volume provides an important new synthesis of archaeological work carried out in Australia on the post-contact period. It draws on dozens of case studies from a wide geographical and temporal span to explore the daily life of Australians in settings such as convict stations, goldfields, whalers' camps, farms, pastoral estates and urban neighbourhoods.*

An Archaeology of Australia since by Lawrence and Davies is significant for a number of reasons. It is an attempt to summarise the achievements of historical archaeology in Australia; namely what historical archaeology has added to the corpus of Australian history. The authors are of the third generation of historical archaeologists in Australia. Moreover, the authors were not educated and based in Sydney. Indeed, their professional education in historical archaeology occurred as the hegemony of the subject by the University of Sydney was being replaced by teaching centres such as those at La Trobe University and Flinders University. Thus, this view of historical archaeology in Australia is one from a different place and different generation to the norm. This is a welcome change in viewpoint. Lawrence and Davies are not young punks intent on critical destruction of the edifice of historical archaeology in Australia. Rather, they are concerned in reporting what has been learned over 30 or 40 years of work. Accordingly, this is a work that ranges widely across the whole breadth of issues in Australian history. The authors admit that some material has been left out simply due to space and they also regret the omission of some New Zealand work of relevance to Australia. The bringing together of diverse material from across Australia is a tremendous achievement and the authors are to be congratulated for doing this successfully. However, their achievement is more than simply bringing information together; they have provided a synthesis of material that is very useful for those working in the field and for students learning about historical archaeology. This is an important benchmarking of historical archaeology in Australia. The authors have divided the work into specific topics that reflect prominent issues in Australian history and attempt a broad-ranging discussion covering a wide geographic area and differences of approach. The principle topics which form individual chapters in the book include: Although each chapter is an entity in itself, the chapters are organised so that each generally leads to the next topic. For this review, rather than attempt a blow-by-blow analysis of each chapter, two chapters were selected by random for more detailed discussion in order to convey a sense of how the authors approach each topic. From this overview Lawrence and Davies identify the themes of continuity and change, technological transfer, landscape and social context as being an important framework for understanding the archaeology of manufacturing and processing in Australia. It is unclear to the reviewer why other themes – such as the nature of capital formation or transport which have been discussed by economic historians – are not also of relevance to the archaeologist studying this broad topic? The chapter continues to discuss some of the archaeological research that illustrates the approaches that Lawrence and Davies highlight as being important. Studies of water mills, for example, discuss the themes of continuity and change, technological transfer and landscape. Other archaeological work on brickworks, potteries and lime-making is also discussed. The coal studies discussed are concerned with marginal aspects of the industry and not the major coal producing areas or periods. All this work is accessible as the researchers have an enviable record of publication. It is unclear why such a body of research is not discussed. The second chapter to be looked at is that covering archaeological research on urban Australia. Again, the chapter opens with a general overview of the field noting the major discussions on the topic. The chapter moves to a discussion of archaeological deposits and formation processes, and then looks at broader analysis of neighbourhoods and cities. The section on site formation processes and their influence on the archaeological evidence in urban environments is a good summary of the archaeological research and would form a useful reading in itself for students learning about formation processes and stratigraphy. From slums the discussion moves towards notions of class and of gentility and respectability developed by Linda Young and explored in archaeological work in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. This chapter is marked by a more coherent subject matter than the broad brush of industrial archaeology, and it is more successful in summarising the arguments and explaining the archaeological research than the chapter on manufacturing and

processing in the previous example. It seems that in reporting on the historical archaeological work, Lawrence and Davies have been at the mercy of their subject matter. A neat coherent topic like urban archaeology is much easier to report on than the sprawling research on industrial archaeology which is not so easily synthesised and the chapters reflect this problem. Lawrence and Davies seem unwilling to comment on areas that might be fruitfully explored or developed in the future. There is also a lack of reflective comment on the overall topics and studies. While it can be understood why this is so, the aim of the book was not to set agendas but report on work undertaken; there seems something missing by not making such comments. The authors are to be congratulated in undertaking such a task and setting the scene for the next decade of growth in the field. This is a work that all serious historical archaeologists need, especially those formulating research designs for projects whether they be salvage archaeology or research archaeology. At the conclusion of this review a comment needs to be made about the price of this work. For a book that deserves to be read by a lot of people, and presumably a book that the publishers feel should be bought by a lot of people, this price point surely is madness.

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*Most people are surprised to learn that there is also another kind of archaeology with meaning for Australians, which is the archaeology of Australia since permanent white settlement began in*