

**CANBERRA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY –
AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY**

SYMPOSIUM

MORE THAN CURIOUS

**PENINSULA ROOM, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIA**

30 APRIL 2022



**The skull of *Homo floresiensis*. Image taken by
Debbie Argue in 2006. Provided by Debbie
Argue.**

PROGRAMME

9.30-9.40 A brief introduction explaining what the day is about, sponsors and housekeeping.

9.40-9.50 Welcome to Country Dr Matilda House

9.50-10.15 Dr Debbie Argue: Three discoveries in human evolution that shook the status quo.

10.15-10.40 Professor Mike Smith: The Elixir of Deep Time

10.40-11.00 Morning Tea (self-provided in cafe)

11.00-11.25 Dr Richard Tuffin: Profit and punish? Using digital humanities to understand convict lives and labour- external video link

11.25-11.50 Dr Aedeon Cremin: Curiosity, colonialism and ceramics at Angkor

11.50-12.25 Q&A Panel of speakers

12.25- 12.30 Thank you's and Close

Bookings: <https://cas-ashasymposium.eventbrite.com.au>

ABSTRACTS and BIOS

Dr Matilda House: Welcome to Country

Dr Matilda House (b. 1945) is a Ngambri/Wiradyuri Elder who has dedicated her life to the pursuit of social justice for Indigenous people. One of ten children, she was born and raised on Erambie-Cowra Aboriginal reserve, Hollywood Aboriginal reserve at Yass and Ngambri-Kamberri Country and has multiple Wiradyuri, Walgalu and Wallabalooa ancestries. In the early 1960's Dr House married and began raising her family of four children on Ngambri Country. In early 1970's she began working as an Aboriginal liaison/social officer at the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra, assisting Aboriginal people with health, education, welfare and employment. A tireless supporter of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy since its founding in 1972, she helped found the ACT/NSW Aboriginal Legal Service, Ngambri Local Aboriginal Land Council in Queanbeyan in the 1980s. She had a key role in establishing Winnunga-Nimmitjah Aboriginal Medical Service and the Australian National University's Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre in 1989, which provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2006, Dr House was named Canberra Citizen of the Year. On the eve of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations in February 2008, she became the first person to perform the Welcome to Country at the 42nd opening of Federal Parliament. Her contribution to her community was recognised by the ANU with the conferral of the Degree of Doctor of the University in 2017.

Dr Debbie Argue: Three discoveries in human evolution that shook the status quo.

Human evolution is full of exciting and ground-breaking discoveries. Here I focus on three that demonstrate the value of our all-very-human sense of curiosity: how we found out we had an ancient but close relative, *Australopithecus africanus*; a surprise find deep in a cave in South

Africa in 2013 that rather mystifies us; and an incredible discovery that rattled the status quo in human evolution, *Homo floresiensis*.

Debbie Argue is an Honorary Lecturer in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Australian National University. Specialising in human evolution, one of her primary interests is the species *Homo floresiensis*, often nicknamed 'the hobbit', about which she has published in the academic arena and popular media. Debbie is also an archaeologist who worked for many years in Australian prehistory, particularly of her local region, Canberra, and the Australian Alps. Prior to undertaking her PhD, Debbie worked in local government, engaged in the identification and conservation of Aboriginal and historic heritage in the broader region.

Professor Mike Smith: The Elixir of Deep Time.

Fifty years of archaeology have transformed the historical imagination of Australians. There is something wonderful in being able to determine time, to get at least some measure of the antiquity of Indigenous history. But the large numbers corrode any sense of humanity. Public appreciation of deep time tends to flatten a rich Indigenous history into a primordial past, a history on a logarithmic scale. This talk is a personal account of the growth of archaeology and its impact in the public domain.

Prof. Mike Smith AM is a veteran field archaeologist whose career coincided with the explosive growth of archaeological research into Australian prehistory. He is also a pioneering desert archaeologist who has worked extensively across the Australian arid zone attempting to piece together a picture of the human and environmental histories of this immense region of drylands.

Dr Richard Tuffin: Profit and punish? Using digital humanities to understand convict lives and labour

This talk will showcase a number of recent projects which have focussed on the management and impact of convict labour in Australia. The projects have sat at a productive – if at times awkward – intersect between archaeology and history, using the built and modified landscapes to challenge the records generated by the administrators. Through the use of archaeological methods, including the analysis of LiDAR-derived mapping, we've been able to in part recreate lost labour landscapes, repopulating them where possible with past people and processes. This talk will demonstrate some of the key outcomes and in

the process show a lot of pretty pictures and maps.

Dr Richard Tuffin is a postdoctoral researcher with the University of New England. During his 20 years as a historical archaeologist, he has worked in the commercial, government and university sectors. His lasting takeaway from this is that all of them require seemingly endless amounts of administration.

Dr Aedeon Cremin: Curiosity, colonialism and ceramics at Angkor

Curiosity about a lost city brought the French to Angkor, and they researched its temples with great thoroughness from 1907 to 1972 (start of the Civil War and rise of the Khmer Rouge). However, they tended to ignore the unspectacular, including locally-made ceramics. These were not investigated until the 21st century, first by Japan's Sophia University then by the University of Sydney's Greater Angkor Project. These studies have enabled the dating of numerous sites and the establishment of more precise chronologies. Today, the research is done entirely by Cambodian archaeologists working for APSARA, the local heritage authority, with significant success.

Aedeon Cremin studied archaeology and early medieval history in Dublin (BA, MA, NUIreland). She did her PhD at USydney (1978), and taught there until 2000, establishing the Celtic Studies program in the 1990s. On retirement she taught at the ANU and UCanberra and worked with the Greater Angkor Project (to 2015) on its excavated ceramics. She is currently researching the involvement of Sri Lanka in the Maritime Silk Road.

This symposium is supported by



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