

That shadowy band: The role of women in the development of Australian archaeology

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This paper is dedicated to Professor Isabel McBryde, in acknowledgement of her contribution to the development of professional archaeology in Australia, and her ability to move with the changing tides of academic history while maintaining the most rigorous standards of research and scholarship.

The role of women in the development of Australian archaeology is so manifest, and has been so substantial, that it hardly seems necessary to devote a paper to it. On the other hand, as the only substantial published history of Australian Aboriginal archaeology does manage to exclude this contribution (Horton 1991; Bowdler 1993), there is clearly a case for indicating what was overlooked. McBryde (1993a: xi) refers to "that intrepid yet often shadowy, even invisible, band of women archaeologists", but we would contend that, in Australia, the band has been rather less diaphanous than that.

In this paper, we address women's contribution to the development of Australian archaeology in its widest sense. We look at the role of particular individuals in the pre-professional and the professionalisation phases (cf. Moser 1995), Aboriginal and historical archaeology and also archaeology in Papua New Guinea (part of Australia during the Pleistocene, after all), archaeology both within and without the academy, the role of those who have supported the enterprise in a generally anonymous fashion, and the role of Aboriginal women who have engaged with archaeologists in different ways. We also consider whether there are particular kinds of contributions which have been made by women, perhaps because they have been restricted by society and circumstance to certain kinds of task, or whether indeed such perceptions are themselves stereotypical.

Obviously, given the space available, this survey will be wide rather than deep, but it is to be hoped that some of the issues raised will be pursued elsewhere in greater depth. We do not address the issue of whether women are or have been equal participants in the workforce (see for instance Goulding et al. 1993). In the belief that it is more difficult to assess the relative weight of more recent contributions, our survey arbitrarily stops at about 1980. At this time, furthermore, Moser (1995: 77) suggests that the discipline was securely established as an autonomous profession.

Before archaeology: the squire's wife

In his introduction to K. Langloh-Parker's *The Euahlayi Tribe*, Andrew Lang writes as follows.

Mrs Parker ... has had, as regards the woman and children of the Euahlayi, all the advantages of the squire's wife in a rural neighbourhood, supposing the squire's wife to be an intelligent and sympathetic lady, with a strong taste for the study of folklore and rustic custom (Langloh-Parker 1905: ix).

We know of many such women in colonial nineteenth century Australia, of whom Langloh-Parker (1856-1940) is just one example. They have provided us with much information about the domestic lives of the Aboriginal people whom they observed, matters of considerable interest to subsequent archaeologists. To compile an exhaustive list of such names and their individual contributions would be a project in itself, but we can mention Ethel Hassell (1857-1933; Hassell 1936, 1975) of southwestern Western Australia, and Mary Bundock (later Murray-Prior; 1845-1924) of northern New South Wales. The latter has been the subject of a study by McBryde, who describes her recording of food preparation and documentation of material culture as comprehensive and professional, meticulous and dedicated (McBryde 1993b: 32-3).

Given Mary Bundock's knowledge and her special opportunities, as woman and long-term resident, it is not surprising that her collections include little-known items and items representing activities not well recorded or omitted from the collections made by others. ... her work does much to redress the imbalance in other sources, written and artefactual (McBryde 1993b: 32-3).

Early anthropologists

Before archaeology was recognized in Australia as a professional discipline, and when its practice consisted mainly of collecting artefacts for personal satisfaction or museum display, much of the information in which modern archaeologists are interested was gathered by anthropologists. Information about Aboriginal material culture in everyday use, methods of food collection and preparation and the division of labour, particularly according to sex, was collected by professional women anthropologists. Not only was the information they gathered of subsequent use to archaeologists, but in many ways they were the forerunners of professional archaeologists who sought this kind of information in similar ways, that is, by participant observation.

Daisy Bates (1859-1951) is one the most famous Australians of the early twentieth century, whose status as a reliable source of information about Aboriginal people has been much debated. White (1993: 65) feels that, on balance, she should be considered an anthropologist despite some evident shortcomings. Of interest to archaeologists are her collections of Aboriginal artefacts in the museums of South Australia and Western Australia, her information gleaned from gathering vegetable food with Aboriginal women, her descriptions of gathering food of all kinds, trapping game, hunting turtle and dugong, and how this was related to an intimate knowledge of the seasons. She described how many tools and weapons were made and why material available in only one place brings about exchange with another place (White 1993: 46, 52, 61).

Wright (1997:1) pays a particular tribute to Bates' archaeological perception in his introduction to a set of papers about stone artefacts, when he says "... I shall use the rest of

this introduction to enjoy two earlier pieces of research into stone implements, the styles of which catch the spirit of much of the work being described in this volume". His second example is a set of letters written by Daisy Bates to an art dealer in Melbourne in response to a series of questions about lithic technology amongst the Aboriginal people with whom she lived. Wright argues that Bates had "archaeological knowledge enough to perceive that her observations call into question a generalisation of European Palaeolithic prehistorians", and that her exchanges with her Melbourne correspondent "have the familiar ring of contemporary debate ... [e]thno-archaeological participatory observation is no longer regarded as eccentric behaviour" (Wright 1997:3; see also Wright 1971).

Women of the earlier twentieth century who are indisputably considered to be professional anthropologists also contributed to the later development of Australian archaeology, particularly with respect to documenting food gathering and preparation practices, and the role of women in these, and also because they often made extensive collections of Aboriginal material culture items for Australian museums. Here we recall particularly the work of Phyllis Kaberry (1910-1977), Ursula McConnell (1888-1957), Olive Pink (1884-1975), and Catherine Berndt (1918-1994). Space forbids justice being done to all these, and others, so we will just mention the work of Kaberry, whose work, according to Cheater (1993: 143), was unusual in that it was one of the few detailed accounts of Aboriginal daily camp activities and food production to be published before the 1980s.

In her major work, *Aboriginal Women Sacred and Profane*, Kaberry described the camp itself, material culture, and the division of labour between the sexes (Kaberry 1938: 6-8, 13), the attitude to the land and understanding of the seasons (1938:10, 11), the distribution and consumption of food (1938:31), the general role of women in the Aboriginal economic system (1938:35). She discusses what items women make for their own purposes, and objects made for more general use (1938:162-3) and considers the wider exchange systems, observing that women have a role as partners in these (1938:166). All such information is grist to the mill of the later archaeologist.

We would also like to mention here the rather special case of Margaret McArthur (b.1919), who started out as a biochemist and became an anthropologist, and along the way took part in a study which would "stand as a landmark in the studies of the health, nutrition, and food of the Aborigines of Arnhem Land" (Mountford 1960:vii). In 1948 McArthur, then studying at the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, joined the multidisciplinary American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land. She and other members of the Nutrition Unit camped with inland and coastal Aboriginal groups at four different sites across Arnhem Land for varying periods of time, and monitored the groups' activities, with a particular emphasis on food procurement (McCarthy and McArthur 1960). McArthur's work in Arnhem Land came twenty four years before Betty Meehan (see below) began recording the economic activities of the Anbarra. Meehan (1982:6) acknowledged the significance of McArthur's contribution to the archaeology and ethnohistory of Arnhem Land, and noted that in the first systematic analysis of a hunting group, published in Lee's 1965 PhD thesis, *The*

Subsistence Ecology of the !Kung Bushmen, the author cites McArthur and McCarthy's (1960) study as the only publication to provide a 'constructive contrast' to his research (Lee 1965:iv).

Early archaeologists

Between the wars, people employed in museums were carrying out archaeological research which went something beyond making collections for exhibitions. The best known of these individuals are of course F. D. McCarthy and N. B. Tindale, but women were also active during this period, although their careers have not been well-documented.

In Tasmania, Jane Ada Fletcher (1870-1956) showed an interest in the Tasmanian Aboriginal past, apparently kindled by a visit to a cave at Boat Harbour in about 1915 (Morris 1993:73). She made collections of artefacts, and presented a rare find of a waddy to the Tasmanian Museum in the 1950s. She was best known for her writings for schools and children (e.g. *Little Brown Picanninnies of Tasmania*) which, while not exactly enlightened by modern standards, did at least have something more or less sympathetic to say about the Tasmanian Aborigines in a time when they were regarded as gone and best forgotten. She also published some archaeological and ethnohistoric compilations intended for a wider audience (e.g. Fletcher [1954]).

In 1928, Miss Lesley Hall, a Science Research Scholar in Geography to the University of Sydney, published a paper on 'Some Aboriginal flakes from Morna Point, New South Wales' in the *Records of the Australian Museum* (Hall 1928). She shows an early interest in debitage analysis.

Cores. These have been collected because of their interesting relationship to the formation of the flakes and not because they are important as implements. In most cases they were discarded as useless, although some show signs of having served a purpose (Hall 1928: 260).

As to her subsequent career, we have no knowledge.

Elizabeth Kennedy was also active in New South Wales at about this time. She apparently had a degree and was active in the Anthropological Society of New South Wales, with her husband Keith Kennedy (du Cros 1993: 241). She published an article in the Society's journal, *Mankind* (now the *Australian Journal of Anthropology*) (Kennedy 1934) describing an excavation in a rock shelter in the Sydney region, with no greater (or less, for that matter) insight than her contemporaries (e.g. Thorpe 1932). Subsequently she is said to have 'drifted away' from archaeology (du Cros 1993: 241).

Little is known of women working in other states at this time. We have a passing mention of a Gwen Walsh from South Australia, who was present at a 'working conference' on archaeology at Millicent, S. A. in 1948 (Tindale 1982).

Best known, and best documented, of this group is undoubtedly Elsie Bramell (1910-1985), recently and posthumously emerging from the shadow of her husband F. D. McCarthy. Bramell was a student of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, who was apparently promised a position in the department there on her graduation, but this was not immediately forthcoming (du Cros 1993: 241). It appears she was employed in a half-time capacity as a teacher by the New South Wales Public Service (Attenbrow and Kahn 1994: 8). She then applied for a position at the Australian Museum in Sydney (du Cros 1993: 241-2).

1 The terms prehistory and its variants are used in this paper in accord with historical context.

The background to this position was as follows. Since 1906, the position of 'Ethnologist' at the Australian Museum had been held by Mr W. W. Thorpe. In March 1932, Frederick D. McCarthy, who had been employed by the Museum since 1920 (when he was 14), was transferred to Ethnology as Thorpe's assistant, to be trained as his understudy (*Australian Museum Archives*: series 1; vol.11, p.269-70; Minutes of Board of Trustees 11 March 1932). In September of that year, Thorpe died and in October the Trustees agreed to appoint a successor (*AMA*: series 1; vol.11, p.315-8; Minutes 14 October 1932). In the meantime, McCarthy, as Assistant Ethnologist, acted in the office of Ethnologist (*AMA*: series 1; vol.11, p.330-1; Minutes 9 December 1932).

In February 1933, "...the Public Service Board, being of the opinion that Miss E. Bramell is the most suitable applicant for the position, recommended her appointment on probation as Scientific Assistant with seniority over Mr McCarthy ..." (*Australian Museum Archives*: series 1; vol.12, p.6; Minutes of Board of Trustees 10 Feb 1933). She came with a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education, and was 23 years old at the time (Attenbrow and Kahn 1994: 8). According to Du Cros (1993: 242), Bramell recalled in 1983 that after applying, "it was a long time before an answer was given". The time between the decision to advertise and the recommendation of appointment was four months, which might not seem a great deal of time these days.

Whatever McCarthy's initial reaction may have been to the appointment over him of a younger but better qualified woman, it is clear that they came to get along more than sufficiently. They both enrolled at the University for higher qualifications, being congratulated by the Trustees in 1935, Bramell for acquiring a Master of Arts degree and McCarthy a Diploma in Anthropology (*AMA*: series 1; vol.12, p.174; Minutes 14 June 1935). In 1940, they were married, and, according to the public service policies of the time which forbade the employment of married women, Bramell resigned from her position as Second Class Scientific Assistant in 1941 (Attenbrow and Khan 1994: 8; *AMA*: series 1; vol.14, p.89; Minutes 3 April 1941). McCarthy observed that the main penalty of their marriage for him was "that I had to manage with a series of untrained general assistants until 1963" (McCarthy 1984: 73).

It is not easy to assess Bramell's contribution to Australian archaeology. While still employed at the Museum, she and McCarthy carried out tasks which included cataloguing museum collections, installing exhibits, registering new acquisitions, and addressing enquiries. After she no longer officially worked with McCarthy at the Museum, Bramell continued to work with him both in the field and on publications, and continued to be a patron of the Anthropological Society of New South Wales (Moser 1995: 81-2). It would therefore seem to be a reasonable assumption that much of the credit for the work for which McCarthy has been recognized might be shared with Bramell (see Khan 1993, Attenbrow and Khan 1994).

There is one achievement with which Bramell's name has been and continues to be inextricably associated, and which McCarthy cites as "the greatest contribution he made to the development of Australian prehistory ... the stone tool classification he produced together with Elsie Bramell and H. V.V. Noone (McCarthy, Bramell & Noone 1946)" (Moser 1995: 82). Whatever one thinks now of this work, there is no denying that, as McCarthy himself said, no previous such classification existed (McCarthy 1984: 74), and, for its time, it

was monumental in scope, and remains (whether acknowledged or not) the basis for most of the terms still used to describe Australian stone artefacts (see White and O'Connell 1982: 28-9).

Isabel McBryde and the institutionalisation of archaeology in Australia

Moser (1995:79) defines professionalisation as "the process of standardising research findings and methods" and also "the contest for power over the construction of disciplinary knowledge". She sees the defining stage of the institutionalisation of archaeology in Australia as the "shift from museums to universities as the major institutional locale in which research on Australian prehistory was undertaken", and observes that the process was begun in the 1950s (Moser 1995: 100). Isabel McBryde was involved, not to say instrumental, in every defining step of these processes; Moser refers to her 'discipline building activities'.

... Mulvaney and McBryde were the two major figures writing on issues of disciplinary identity before prehistory was formally introduced as a discipline at Sydney University and the Australian National University in 1961 ... Mulvaney and McBryde were the first university trained prehistorians to introduce the subject with an academic context. Academic archaeology began as a result of these two professional historians travelling overseas to gain prehistory qualifications, and then returning to incorporate what they had learnt in their training (Moser 1995: 101).

Isabel McBryde, with an Honours degree in Latin and History and a Masters in Latin from Melbourne University, undertook the Cambridge University Diploma in Prehistoric Archaeology in 1959 and was then appointed to a lectureship in the Department of History at the University of New England in 1960. Here she set about carrying out field research in the Aboriginal archaeology of the New England region of northern New South Wales, and also in training students in the practice, theory and substance of prehistoric archaeology. In 1962, she was amongst the first recipients of research grants from the newly established (in 1961) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies).

McBryde was responsible for the first students who were formally trained in archaeology in Australia. In 1964, the first prehistory Honours thesis in Australian archaeology was submitted at the University of New England by Sharon Sullivan (Moser 1995: 178), to whose career we will return below. Many of McBryde's early graduates were women (e.g. Helen Brayshaw in 1966, Valerie Campbell in 1969). In 1966, McBryde herself was, as far as we can tell, the first person to be awarded a PhD degree for research based on Australian archaeological fieldwork.

The kind of research on which McBryde embarked blazed a new trail in Australian archaeology. Rather than concentrating on excavation and stone tool typologies as central to her enterprise, she used a combination of field archaeology and ethnohistorical research to establish the range of sites found in her research region and their relationship to the environment in order to develop a holistic view of Aboriginal social and cultural life in the New England area (Moser 1995: 119, 121, 128; e.g. McBryde 1974a, 1976, 1977, 1978). She has been instrumental in developing the

theoretical and methodological bases for the critical use of ethnohistorical resources (McBryde 1979a). McBryde's work on exchange in Aboriginal Australia was equally path-breaking and continues to be a significant influence (Binns and McBryde 1972, McBryde 1979b, McBryde 1997, McBryde and Harrison 1981, McBryde and Watchman 1976, 1993).

It was not only in terms of teaching and research that Isabel McBryde was one of the most significant discipline builders in Australian archaeology. A significant event in the development of professional archaeology in Australia was the formation of the Australian Archaeological Association in 1973; McBryde was its first Secretary (McBryde 1974b). She attended the first Australian conferences which included symposia dedicated to Australian archaeology, the ANZAAS conferences of 1964 and 1967 (Moser 1995: 151), and contributed a report to the first newsletter of the Australian Archaeological Association in 1974 which summarised current research and included a detailed bibliography (McBryde 1974c). She was a member of the first Prehistory Advisory Panel of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Perhaps most important has been McBryde's steadfast support for the crucial matters of legislative protection of the archaeological research and wider heritage concerns, and a fruitful and appropriate relationship between archaeologists and Aboriginal people (Moser 1995: 129). She has been outspoken on these matters on the international front (e.g. 1985). Perhaps even more important has been her unwavering dedication to and support of Aboriginal students in archaeology, particularly during her more recent appointment (1985-1994) as Professor in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Australian National University.

Teaching archaeology: other women pioneers

After an early start in New England, the teaching of archaeology began in several Australian universities, with appointments from overseas. Jack Golson was appointed to the fledgling Department of Prehistory at the Australian National University in 1961, and began the recruitment of post-graduate students from Australia and the rest of the world. The appointment of Richard Wright to the Department of Anthropology in 1962 initiated a program of training local undergraduates.

Women had a significant role in developments elsewhere. At the University of Western Australia, the teaching of archaeology within the Department of Anthropology was begun in 1970 by Sylvia Hallam, an archaeology graduate from Cambridge University. She also carried out research on the archaeology and ethnohistory of the Swan Valley (Hallam 1975).

Laila Haglund arrived in Australia after completing an undergraduate degree in classical archaeology in Sweden. In 1956 she was introduced to V. Gordon Childe, who encouraged Haglund's interest in Australian prehistory, and at his suggestion, she travelled to London to attend the Institute of Archaeology, where she gained a Certificate of Conservation followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in World Prehistory. Back in Queensland, she was granted a BA (Hons) by the University of Queensland at the recommendation of the Institute of Archaeology. She later completed a Masters degree at the University of Queensland. In the early 1970s the University of Queensland included prehistory in its curriculum for the first time, and Haglund was hired to lecture. With respect to research, in 1967-8, Haglund excavated the Aboriginal burial ground at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast, still one of the largest undertakings of its kind carried out in Australia. Her report is a

model of descriptive detail (Haglund 1976). Laila Haglund also played a significant role in the development of Indigenous heritage legislation, discussed below.

Historical archaeology

Up to this point we have been concerned with Aboriginal archaeology. Historical archaeology has now become a significant aspect of the discipline in Australia, and for that much credit is due to Judy Birmingham. Birmingham was appointed to the Department of Archaeology (which specialised in Classical and other Old World subjects) as a Senior Lecturer in Near Eastern Archaeology in 1961. Wishing to turn her hand to something closer to home, in 1965 she began, with the assistance of the Sydney University Archaeological Society, to excavate at the colonial pottery site of Irrawang, in the lower Hunter Valley of New South Wales. This work continued into the 1970s, along with excavations at Hill End, also in NSW, and the important contact site of Wybalenna on Flinders Island in the Bass Strait (Birmingham 1976, 1990, 1992).

Judy Birmingham was also instrumental in disciplinary (or, as we might say, sub-disciplinary) building activities for historical archaeology. She was the provisional Honorary Secretary for the fledgling Australian Association of Historical Archaeology in 1970, and its formal Honorary Secretary when it began operating in earnest in 1971. Birmingham also initiated teaching in historical archaeology at Sydney University, with an interdisciplinary course under the direct auspices of the Faculty of Arts in 1974. Many graduates, including those with higher degrees, have since emanated from this source.

Brian Egloff has paid particular tribute to Birmingham's role in putting historical archaeology in Australia on a secure footing.

In 1967 upon arrival in Australia, one of my first archaeological experiences was to listen to Judy Birmingham present a paper to the Canberra Archaeological Society on the excavations at Irrawang, in the Hunter Valley. ... [The] attempt to delve into the mind behind the pattern struck me as being equal to, if not ahead of, the thinking of my colleagues in the United States. [in the late 1970s] Judy Birmingham continued at the University of Sydney as a Senior Lecturer in Near Eastern Archaeology and tacked on to her departmental responsibilities what is now widely acknowledged to be the role of the founding figure of Australian historical archaeology. ... Students were active in all of [her subsequent] fieldwork thus spawning a generation of historical archaeologists who would bear the brunt of public archaeology in the 1980s and 1990s (Egloff 1994: 1-2).

Women have continued to play an important part in Australian historical archaeology. One of the landmark excavations was the First Government House site in Sydney, carried out under the initial direction of Annie Bickford (Bickford 1985). This site, located as it was on a piece of prime real estate in the CBD, also proved a rallying point for the heritage movement in the 1980s, setting out parameters for the future management of such situations (e.g. Walker 1985, see also McBryde 1988).

Legislation

With respect to heritage concerns, women have been conspicuously active in the development and implementation

of heritage management legislation. Elsie Bramell and Fred McCarthy worked hard to get some form of legislation in place to protect the archaeological sites of New South Wales.

Sharon Sullivan, whom we have mentioned as the first Australian Honours graduate in archaeology, worked for a time as a school teacher and research assistant to Isabel McBryde. In 1969, Sullivan was recruited by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service to work as an archaeologist and historian. In 1970, she was instrumental in the implementation of a key amendment to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Act which related to the protection and maintenance of Aboriginal cultural resources. In the course of her career with the Service, Sullivan was appointed Senior Cultural Heritage Manager (1973-85), Regional Director (1985-89), and Deputy Director (1989-90). Sullivan views her considerable efforts to make the government and public aware of the strength and reciprocity of the relationship between Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal people as one of the most significant achievements of her career (Sullivan Feb. 2000: pers. comm.). Perhaps one of Sullivan's most enduring legacies to Australian archaeology is her contribution to the establishment of cultural resource management in this country. Given the number of women who have followed this career path, it would certainly be reasonable to cite Sullivan as a role model in this area, and in the service itself she has been succeeded by Jeannette Hope, Helen Clemmens, Evelyn Crawford and Sue MacIntyre. She has also paved the way for women in similar positions elsewhere, for instance Rosemary Buchan. Sharon Sullivan recently retired from her position of Executive Director of the Australian Heritage Commission.

In Brisbane, Laila Haglund was asked by the Queensland government to help to prepare a draft of Queensland's heritage legislation, which was enacted in 1967. After the legislation passed into law, Haglund was appointed to the ministerial Statutory Committee, where she advised on policy administration. The Queensland Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act was the first piece of legislation designed to protect Aboriginal material culture in Australia.

In 1971 the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was created by the Queensland government, and Kate Sutcliffe, armed with a bachelor's degree from Adelaide and a post-graduate degree from Amsterdam, was appointed Officer in Charge of the Department's Archaeology Branch. The Department employed three archaeologists and seven Aboriginal rangers to implement and administer the new legislation. Sutcliffe was instrumental in the establishment of this Aboriginal Ranger Service, and held various positions within the Department until 1984. Sutcliffe made a crucial contribution to the development of Aboriginal Heritage legislation in Queensland, and in a more indirect manner, to Heritage legislation in the rest of the country. As the former chairman of Queensland's Relics Advisory Committee, John Burless, puts it, "Queensland had taken the step of legislating to protect material culture before any other State with the consequence that what happened in Queensland influenced the other governments to get their Acts together" (Burless 2000: pers. comm.). Sutcliffe's vital contribution to the implementation and administration of Aboriginal material culture policy, combined with the success of the Aboriginal Ranger Service in Queensland gave the impetus for heritage legislation and the inclusion of Aboriginal people and archaeologists in policy design and administration throughout the rest of the country.

The development of cultural resource legislation in Australia inevitably led to a burgeoning field of consulting archaeology. Many archaeologists, and particularly women, have made a career out of consulting work, and from early on it was evident that some structure would be useful to support individuals working permanently or occasionally in this entrepreneurial area. In 1980, the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists came into being (Sullivan 1980), and, again, women were instrumental in its creation, particularly Laila Haglund, Helen Brayshaw, Kate Sullivan, and Marjorie Sullivan (no relation). Subsequent national presidents have included Mary Dallas and Jo McDonald.

Women in research

We have already mentioned the efforts of the early archaeologists such as Elsie Bramell, and the important pioneering work of Isabel McBryde in New England, in establishing professional research into Australian Indigenous archaeology. From the 1960s on, many women have followed in their footsteps, in research ranging from painstaking area studies to spectacular headline-hogging discoveries.

In 1975, Ron Lampert published a paper in the international journal *Antiquity*, which reviewed what he considered to be significant research which had been or was being carried out in Australian archaeology. As well as the work of Isabel McBryde, he mentions research by Carmel Schrire, Josephine Flood, Sandra Bowdler and Betty Meehan (although he bestowed her with the wrong initial).

Schrire came to Australia in 1964 as Carmel White, one of the new recruits for postgraduate study at the Australian National University. For her PhD research, she chose to work in Arnhem Land, in the region of the future Kakadu National Park. White/Schrire's success was stunning, not only in establishing deep sequences in sandstone rockshelter sites which spanned 22,000 years of Aboriginal occupation, but also in finding ground-edge axes of this antiquity. This discovery in particular flew in the face of every established paradigm of Old World Prehistory, and served to put Australia on the world map of archaeological discovery (White 1967a, 1967b, 1971, 1982). Her work was moreover a model of meticulous archaeological excavation and observation, and she also generated a significant theoretical debate with respect to cultural and environmental interpretations of the archaeological record (White 1967c, White and Peterson 1969).

Josephine Flood's PhD research highlighted the rather surprising role of bogong moths in the past lives of Aboriginal people in the southern highlands areas on New South Wales, but also illuminated the complex lives of these people in the recent and far past (Flood 1980). Flood, originally a Classics graduate from Cambridge University, has also done Australian archaeology great service in her popular books on the subject, which have brought many aspects of the discipline into the ken of people in all walks of life (Flood 1983 and subsequent editions; 1990, 1997).

Sandra Bowdler² completed her Honours degree at the University of Sydney in 1971, and gained her PhD from the Australian National University in 1979. Since the early 1970s, Bowdler has made several major contributions to the development of pre-contact archaeology in Australia. Perhaps the one which sparked the most excitement and debate was her theory of the colonisation of Australia via its coastlines by people with a marine-based economy and technology (Bowdler

² This section was written by Genevieve Clune.

1977). This theory held major implications for research in this country, and the Pleistocene dating of a number of coastal sites around the continent provided support for it. Bowdler's doctoral research at Cave Bay Cave on Hunter Island resulted in the first allocation of Pleistocene antiquity to a Tasmanian site, and effectively resolved 150 years of debate about the origins of Tasmanian Aboriginals (Bowdler 1979, 1984b). Another pioneering development in Australian archaeology was Bowdler's (1976) identification of gender-based economic activities in the prehistoric archaeological record through her application of ethnographic data to material excavated from the Bass Point shell midden (coastal New South Wales).

The variety of Bowdler's work in Australian archaeology is evident in her prolific publication record. Her guidelines for site surveys and the assessment of archaeological significance are frequently referred to by consultants, heritage managers, and academics (especially Bowdler 1981, 1984a). Bowdler's contributions to archaeology also lie in the area of education; she has taught Australian archaeology since the early 1970s.

No discussion of the significance of the contribution of women to the development of Australian archaeology could be made without reference to the work of Betty Meehan (also known as Hiatt). After working as a teacher in Sydney, Bourke, Darwin, and Canberra, Meehan established a school for Aboriginal children on a settlement in Arnhem Land in 1958. Meehan graduated from the University of Sydney with a BA (Hons) and Masters degree in Anthropology, and received her Ph.D. from the Australian National University in 1975. Her Honours thesis consisted of a synthesis of ethnohistorical information about the diet and economy of the Tasmanian Aborigines, the first modern view of the topic, which made use of the journals of George Augustus Robinson which had only then become available (Hiatt 1967). For her Master's thesis, she produced another magisterial synthesis of ethnohistoric and archaeological information pertaining to the disposal of the dead in Aboriginal society. It is still the most indispensable work on the subject (Meehan 1971).

As part of her Ph.D. fieldwork, Meehan collaborated with Rhys Jones in spending a year with the Anbarra Aboriginal community of northern Arnhem Land. Meehan's specific aims were to monitor the shell-gathering regime of the Anbarra and to explore the role of shellfish in the community's total economy (Meehan 1982:ix). The significance of Meehan's work with the Anbarra to the development of Australian archaeology is difficult to overstate. Her work "focussed world attention on the economic role of female hunter-gatherers" (Beck and Head 1990:41).

A New Guinea aside

It is not often mentioned that professional archaeological research in Papua New Guinea was pioneered by a woman, Susan Bulmer. Bulmer began excavations in the New Guinea highlands in the late 1950s, establishing long sequences in the rockshelters Yuku and Kiowa (Bulmer 1964a, 1964b, 1966). She also investigated sites in the Port Moresby area, and generated syntheses of Papua New Guinean archaeology (1975, 1982).

Rock art

In the somewhat specialised area of Aboriginal rock art, women have also made their mark. Of particular significance has been the contribution of Lesley Maynard, formerly Lesley McMaha. She graduated with Honours in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, presenting a thesis based on a quantitative study of rock engravings in the Sydney area, one of the first such to be carried out (McMaha 1965). In

1966, she was appointed to a teaching fellowship at Sydney¹, and embarked on a Master's degree, submitted in 1976, which embodied an ambitious stylistic and chronological scheme for Australian Aboriginal rock art (Maynard 1979). Such has been the influence of this that McDonald has been moved to remark that "Maynard's 1976 MA thesis ... has subsequently provided the fundamental framework within which most current researchers toil ..." (McDonald 1994: 41).

Another bench mark in rock art research is considered to be that of Andree Rosenfeld who was appointed to the Australian National University in 1972 (Morwood and Smith 1994: 20). Of particular significance was her work in Cape York, particularly the Pleistocene dating of engraved motifs in a rockshelter (Rosenfeld et al. 1981). This is also an area in which a dedicated band of women researchers have persevered, both professionals such as Mary Dallas, Jo McDonald and Josephine Flood, and amateurs such as Rosemary Taplin.

Aboriginal women and archaeology

Only recently have Aboriginal women begun to pursue archaeological careers. Professor Marcia Langton started as an undergraduate in archaeology at the Australian National University (see Langton 1996), but we would be presumptuous indeed to include her as an archaeologist. Gaye Sculthorpe, now Head of the Indigenous Cultures Program at the Museum of Victoria, has carried out research on material culture topics within the context of archaeology departments (Sculthorpe 1987, 1996). Robyne Bancroft, a 1994 graduate of the Australian National University works as a professional archaeologist and heritage practitioner.

It is interesting that many of the significant interventions made in the practice of Australian archaeology have come from Aboriginal women. In 1975, Sandra Onus, on behalf of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee for Victoria, while recognising the value of archaeological research, drew attention in no uncertain terms to the need for archaeologists to take note of Aboriginal viewpoints in their work (Onus 1975). In 1979, a conference was held at Kioloa to acquaint archaeologists and Aboriginal people with each others' views; this has been summarised by Pat Torres (1980). Again, Torres was concerned to point out to archaeologists that they should be sharing their information with the Aboriginal people who had originally generated their research base. The paper by Ros Langford, presented on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to an Australian Archaeological conference in Hobart in 1982, again emphasised the need for consultation and negotiation between archaeologists and Aboriginal communities (Langford 1983). Well, we may say it took a long time, but eventually most of us got the message, and in no small part was it due to these forthright statements from Aboriginal women. Most of us now would no doubt wish to pay tribute to Aboriginal women with whom we have collaborated in productive and reciprocal relationships in the field and elsewhere in our work.

Supportive women

All archaeologists and their endeavours are kept afloat by a vast regiment of publicly nameless women in many capacities. Everyone who works in an institution has reason to be grateful to secretaries, administrative officers, draughtspersons, technical assistants and research assistants who more often than not are women. Generally such individuals receive a

¹ In which capacity she was a tutor of one S. Bowdler in Anthropology I.

grateful mention in the acknowledgements of learned books and papers, but here we would like to pay a particular tribute to this especially shadowy band. It is difficult to single out individuals without ending up with a literally endless list, but we will mention here a couple of women who have been particularly significant in supporting roles.

Winifred Mumford was brought into the newly established Department of Prehistory at the Australian National University by Jack Golson as its scientific illustrator. In fact her consummate skill speaks for itself in any number of publications and theses emanating from the first twenty or so years of that department. Rhys Jones provides particular acknowledgment of her skills in his PhD thesis: "it has been a thrill to see my field and laboratory sketches so brilliantly transformed into their final products which I am honoured to be able to include with my own work here" (Jones 1971: iv). Mumford generously shared her secrets in a published guide to archaeological illustration, although her final products have rarely been equalled (Mumford 1983). Much of the impact made by the Prehistory Department's offerings on the world at large can surely be attributed to their superb illustrations.

One of the most significant bodies in the development of Australian archaeology has been the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Not only has it been a significant funding body since 1961, it has also been a place which has served as a meeting place for academics from many disciplines, and between academics and Aboriginal people in various capacities. It also of course houses a magnificent collection of research materials about Aboriginal society. One of the stalwarts of the Institute staff, who has helped many Australian archaeologists in ways too numerous to mention, is Jacquie Lambert. Lambert was born in England, but landed in Australia after several months' travel, in what was intended to be one stop on a world tour. She got a job for a few months as secretary to the first Principal of the Institute, Fred McCarthy, because she really wanted to find out something about Aborigines. Within a year she was appointed as Administrative Officer, eventually as Executive Officer, and has been there ever since. Those of us who have had various kinds of dealings with the Institute, as grant applicants, grantees, members of committees of various kinds, have found Jacquie Lambert to be a pillar of strength and organisational support in every way.

Women's research: is it distinctive?

Beck and Head (1990: 40-41) asked whether women write in different ways and from different perspectives to men in archaeology. They concluded that this was an argument difficult to sustain, because "only rarely is the topic of research specifically related to gender". Corkill (1985) attempted a quantified survey, and also concluded that the "suggestion that women are more inclined than men to write about women's activities [was] not substantiated in *Australian Archaeology*" [the journal]. She found that women wrote on a wide range of topics with "no clear bias to write about women's topics" (Beck and Head 1990: 40).

This does not however quite answer the original question. It is still possible that women do address different issues from different perspectives, but that they are not necessarily related to gender or gendered topics. This is still open for debate and investigation, it seems to us. McBryde has pointed out that few have followed her path of the wide regional survey, and those that have, have been women (Flood, Hallam; McBryde 1986: 20). As Bowdler has said elsewhere, omitting the contribution of women to the development of Australian archaeology means

"no emphasis on regional survey, no ethnohistory, no significant role for ethnographic analogy nor ethnoarchaeology" (Bowdler 1993). As well as these areas, it is clear that women have covered the same range of topics in Australian archaeology as men have, and with just as much success in the charismatic areas of spectacular discoveries and old dates. We point out that at the time of writing the oldest dates for Australian sites dated by uncontroversial means include those for sites excavated by Sue O'Connor (1995) and Jane Balme (pers.comm.) It is possible that in fact women cover a wider range of topics, all in all. As in other areas of life, women may not be well represented at all levels, but they tend to do more.

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