

# Archaeology and Natural History

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## Field and Lab Notes:

**Geoff Clark** and **Christian Reepmeyer** used the pXRF device on Samoan adze collections at the Auckland Institute and Museum in November to examine the pattern of prehistoric long-distance interaction in Fiji-West Polynesia. More than 300 stone tools were analysed and all proved to be local in contrast to Tonga and other islands where Samoan adzes make up a large proportion of the stone tool assemblage. In Tonga, **Geoff** signed an MOU with the Tongan Traditions Committee headed by Lord Vaea and the leader of the Lapah Community the Honourable Kalaniuvalu-Fotofili to assist with the World Heritage cultural dossier of the monuments of the Tui Tonga maritime chiefdom.

**Simon Haberle** is currently working in a range of sites across northern Australia (Kimberley, Atherton Tablelands and Lizard Island) and the Indian Ocean (Seychelles and Cocos-Keeling Islands). He and Cassandra Rowe have recently discovered the longest pollen record from the Kimberley region



Beach rock quarry where slabs were cut for the tombs of Tongan chiefs

dating back to beyond 22000 years. He is also applying stable isotope analysis (d13C and d15N) to soil profiles associated with archaeological sites near tropical grassland-rainforest boundaries. This will provide a better understanding of the impact of people on vegetation change in the tropics.

In July 2010 **Mirani Litster** spent a month at the Kon-Tiki museum in Oslo, Norway analysing previously excavated material from Thor Hey-

erdahl's Maldives expedition. Complete post excavation analysis will be completed at ANU over the coming months. In addition, **Mirani** conducted further background research at the Maldivian National Archives in Male', the Maldives in August.

**Judith Cameron** spent the month of October as a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Textile Research at the University of Copenhagen. She presented a paper at CTR, entitled 'Recent Research into Archaeological Textiles in Southeast Asia' and contributed to the CTR's 'First Textiles Project'.

**Ulli Proske** commenced her post-doctoral research in October. Her interest focuses on Holocene coastal development in the Kimberley region. **Ulli** will also examine the impact of past cyclones and tsunamis on coastal evolution. Fieldwork will commence in April with the collection of sediment cores. She is currently analyzing sediments from Lizard Island.

## In Other News ...

**Jack Fenner** was promoted to Level B for the academic portion of his appointment. The promotions committee was very impressed with both the high standard and quantity of his research, while

maintain the absolute integrity of the archaeology labs.

**Ulli Proske** co-authored "The palaeoenvironmental development of the northeastern Vietnamese Mekong River Delta since the mid

Holocene" in *The Holocene* 20(8) this year.

**Dr Michael Fletcher** will be starting as a new postdoc in our department in March 2011.

## 2010 AAA Conference



Dhoni in the Maldives with view towards Male' in background.

Sally Brockwell and Janelle Stevenson ... were part of a successful ARC linkage bid: *Enhancing Cultural Heritage Management for Mining Operations...*

**Mirani Litster** is convening the Seascapes and Islands session and is presenting a paper entitled: *The Early Human Occupation of the Maldives* within the same session.

**Simon Haberle** and **Janelle Stevenson** are co-convening the Integrated Approaches to Palaeoecological and Archaeological Research session. The following people are presenting in this session:

**Ulli Proske** - The north-eastern Mekong River Delta since the Mid-Holocene: Palaeoecological history and implications for pre-historic settlements

**Simon Haberle, Jan Finn, Matthew Prebble,** and **Geoff Hope** - Palaeoecological perspectives on the antiquity of Sago (*Metroxylon sagu* Rottb.) cultivation in Papua New Guinea.

Matthew Felgate, **Simon G. Haberle,** Jim Specht, Carol Lentfer William R. Dickinson, Peter Sheppard, **Wal Ambrose,** Fiona R. Cameron - Searching for the Lapita Cultural Complex on North Queensland's Coral Coast.

**Michael-Shawn Fletcher** - The origin and temporal development of an ancient cultural landscape.

**Sue O'Connor** and Denis Byrne (Department of Environment and Climate Change, NSW) have an ARC Linkage called *Rethinking Cultural Heritage in Southeast Asia* researching cultural heritage management of protected areas. An outcome for the project will be the upcoming session *Rethinking Cultural Heritage in Asia Pacific Region* at AAA, organized by **Sue** and Denis. **Sally Brockwell** is a Research Associate on this project.

**Katherine Seikel** is presenting a paper entitled: Monumentality in Micronesia: The Landscapes of a Pacific Blind-spot in the Monumental Landscapes session.

**Sally Brockwell** and Colin Pardoe are co-convening the Earthen Mounds in Australia session. **Sally** is presenting on Earth mounds and climate change in northern Australia.

Peter Dowling (National Trust) and **Sally Brockwell** are presenting: The Archaeology of the Australian Capital Territory: A Strategic Region for Understanding Cultural and natural landscapes in South Eastern Australia of the Last 20,000 Years in the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeology session.

**Sue O'Connor,** Sandra Pannell and **Sally Brockwell** are presenting a paper entitled: Telco Takeovers: An Archaeology of 'Elevated' Spaces in East Timor in the Wastelands: Subversive Spaces and Landscapes of Contemporary Life session.

**Mirani Litster** and **Christian Reepmeyer** are co-convening the Poster Session.

For any presenters that we may have missed, our apologies.

The editors would like to thank many people in ANH for organizing this years conference.

For more information on session times: <<http://arts.anu.edu.au/AandA/archaeology/aaaconference/>>

## Grants and Awards



Simon Haberle in the field.

Michael-Shawn Fletcher (IRF) and **Simon Haberle** received a Discovery Indigenous Researcher Development Grant. The project is titled: *Tracking the response of the Australian climate to abrupt climate change Project Summary*. This project will use cutting-edge climate proxy analyses to

reconstruct the response of the Australian climate system to global climate change over the last 2,000 years.

**Sally Brockwell** and Janelle **Stevenson,** along with several researchers from other universities and Rio Tinto Alcan as Linkage Partner, were part of a successful ARC Linkage bid: *Enhancing Cul-*

*tural Heritage Management for Mining Operations: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach,* which was reported on in the last newsletter. It means that they now have funding for archaeological and palaeoecological field research on earth mounds and lagoons in the Weipa region.

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Research in Archaeology and Natural History at the ANU School of Culture, History and Language aims to understand prehistoric human societies, the environments in which they developed and the environmental consequences of human presence. Departmental research ranges from southeast Asia and the Pacific, through the tropical forests of New Guinea and the savannahs of Australia, to the islands of Oceania.

Field research in ANH is supported by well-equipped laboratories that were fully updated and refurbished during 2009. Our laboratories support research into prehistoric textiles, archaeobotanical remains, rock art, prehistoric environments, zoological material and ceramics. ANH houses the largest pollen reference collection in Australia, as well as plant, bone, shell and ceramic collections. We also have access to world-class ANU facilities for archaeological dating, stable isotope analysis, and electron microscopy.

## Upcoming Events ...

### Morning Teas

7th December: ANH morning tea provided by Simon and Sue Rule at 10:30 am.

11th January: ANH morning tea provided by Christian and Feli at 10:30 am.

8th February: ANH morning tea provided by Mirani and Ulli at 10:30 am.

### Conferences

10-13 December: AAA annual meeting at Bateman's Bay.

<<http://arts.anu.edu.au/AandA/archaeology/aaaconference/>>

30 March-3 April 2011: SAA annual meeting in Sacramento, CA.

<<http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/AnnualMeeting/tabid/138/Default.aspx>>

20-27 July 2011: INQUA Conference, Bern, Switzerland.

<<http://www.inqua2011.ch/?a=next>>