

## REVIEWS

D.A. Weston (ed.) *The Sleeping City – the story of Rookwood Necropolis*, Society of Australian Genealogists in conjunction with Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1989; pp.160, illustrated. ISBN 0 86806 343 6.

Rookwood Necropolis, situated 15 kilometres west of Sydney, was established in 1867, and is today reputedly the largest nineteenth century cemetery in the world, covering some 300 hectares and containing one million graves. It was laid out in the elaborate gardenesque style typical of the Victorian era with ornate shelters, winding gravel paths, water features and careful plantings of shrubs and trees to provide a 'pleasant resting place for the dead and a comforting site for visiting mourners'. By the turn of the century the cemetery had acquired a reputation as one of the scenic spots of the outer Sydney metropolitan area, and was highly regarded for its beauty, often favourably compared with the city's Botanic Gardens. Today, despite years of simple neglect and wilful vandalism, the cemetery continues to attract the attention of a wide cross-section of the community. *The Sleeping City – the story of Rookwood Necropolis* provides some indication of the cemetery's enduring appeal and heritage value.

As its title implies, *The Sleeping City* is not a comprehensive history. The book's initial chapters focus on particular aspects of the cemetery: the events leading up to its establishment, its original design and continued development, the rail link built to service its transport need, its funerary symbolism, and its significance as an urban refuge for plant and animal species. Later chapters celebrate the impressive achievements of the Society of Australian Genealogists whose members laboured for eight years to record every inscription in the cemetery as their contribution to Australia's Bicentenary. These chapters describe the organisational problems associated with this daunting task, provide amusing anecdotes relating to members' experiences in the field, illustrate some of the ways in which the information gathered may be used for broader demographical, sociological and historical enquiry, and elaborate on the Society's intention to make transcription data accessible through computer technology.

The book's editor, David Weston, has selected a satisfying blend of contributors ranging from heritage experts to enthusiastic amateurs to tell Rookwood's story. As a consequence chapters vary in style from scholarly to conversational with an emphasis on narrative rather than analysis. Readers who prefer to browse will find *The Sleeping City* a pleasure, for each chapter is largely self-contained and can be appreciated equally well in isolation from other contributions. Joan Sigrist's selection of sketches, maps and photographs, both colour and black and white, complement the text and contribute to the book's appeal. A select bibliography is also provided for those who wish to become more familiar with particular aspects of Rookwood or the heritage significance of cemeteries generally.

Readers, no doubt, will notice similarities between the presentation of *The Sleeping City* and the series produced under the auspices of the New South Wales Public Works Department History Project. The co-publishers involved in both productions, Hale and Iremonger, are to be commended for bringing these varied historical themes before the general public in such an attractive, reasonably priced format.

*The Sleeping City* reinforces, by example, the importance of cemeteries as heritage resources and illustrates the pressing need for appropriate management planning to protect their vulnerable natural and cultural values. While the book itself is unlikely to provide heritage professionals with any new insights, the transcription project which it commemorates undoubtedly offers enormous scope for analytical research. It will be interesting to monitor the use of the information collected by the Society of Australian Genealogists in future social studies.

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L. Coltheart (ed.), *Significant Sites: History and Public Works in New South Wales*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1989; pp.192, illustrated. ISBN 0 86806 364 9.

Where Sydney Cove her lucid bosom swells,  
Courts her young navies, and the storm repels;  
High on a rock amid the troubled air  
HOPE stood sublime, and wav'd her golden  
hair...

"Hear me!" she cried, "Ye raising Realms! Record  
"Time's opening scenes, and Truth's unerring  
word.

"There shall broad street the stately walls extend,  
"The circus widen, and the crescent bend;

"There ray'd from cities o'er the cultured land,  
"Shall bright canals, and solid roads expand..."

As these words of Erasmus Darwin in 1789 foresaw, public works have been fundamental both to the practicalities of white settlement in Australia and to the Englishmen's self-image of their civilising mission. But who were the 'public' for whom our public works were made? There is no simple answer. These essays suggest that the first 150 years of public works were as full of class distinctions, hidden agendas, bureaucratic incompetence, frequent venality and occasional nobility, just as in more recent times.

The book is the sixth in a series being produced by the History Project of the New South Wales Public Works Department. It contains eight essays, of which six describe 'significant sites', ranging from the early nineteenth century to as recent as Sydney Harbour Bridge. In spite of the claim in the introduction, this is no general overview of the cultural significance of public works, and presents no unified thesis. It teaches by example. The examples are mostly extraordinary and atypical public works and mostly of the Sydney region. They are chosen for their historical interest with essays focusing on the social and political background to their construction. They bring to light fascinating details which otherwise, no doubt, would have remained buried in unpublished theses and reports.

J.E. Sait kicks off with an overview of the first 100 years of public works and town planning. The author's thesis is that early town planning was influenced by the desire of the powerful elite to control the proletariat. An example offered is that wide streets were more difficult for the proletariat to barricade. Such a whirlwind tour through a century necessarily lacks the primary source references which would give strength to the argument. While some of the symbolic assumptions seem to be drawing the bow a bit long, such as the view that the Victorian gothic style

'indicated the realisation of the Victorian home as castle', or that the eclecticism of Victorian public architecture 'suggested perhaps a modern uncertainty about appropriate spiritual symbolism'. This is a good scene setting essay, full of interesting detail; its thesis is thought-provoking, but not completely convincing.

Jim Kerr describes the early days of Parramatta jail (1830s–1840s). The straightforward site specific story has clear and well argued themes: the complexities created by bureaucratic power relationships, and the strong influence of fashionable and oft changing ideologies on design. At Parramatta one wing changed from single cells to shared cells in 1838 (as an economy measure); back to single cells by 1898; back to shared cells; and back to single cells in the 1980s. Such examples are a salutary reminder to the archaeologist and architectural historian what a minefield the evidence of the fabric can be after a century or two.

Helen Proudfoot takes us through the genesis of the Australian Museum detailing a fascinating mixture of high ideals at a time of growing scientific interest, bureaucratic squabbling and misunderstanding.

Shirley Fitzgerald describes the political background to Sydney's 1879 International Exhibition. It is a tale of delays, indecent haste and outrageous cost overruns as the Exhibition building used innovative 'fast-track' construction methods, including the first use in Sydney of electric arc lights on night shifts. The parallels to the Darling Harbour Bicentennial development are obvious and amusing, even down to blaming the weather. The verdict on the hastily staged, grossly unprofitable and never-repeated exhibition is complex. It was the first sustained attempt at 'celebrating the nation', and possibly sparked interest in urban environment issues. But at the same time, it was not so much the vaunted 'festival of peace' as a festival of production, and the orgy of self-righteous national pride which it inspired did not prevent the exploitation of the unemployed in its construction. This has interesting parallels with the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge 50 years later. As with Darling Harbour, in judging it we must try not only to see the reality that it became, but also to imagine what else it might have been.

Sue Zelinka deals with our early psychiatric hospitals. It is a sorry story of official parsimony and public indifference, tempered by the unremitting efforts of humane individuals. Even when more enlightened attitudes developed among professionals, delays in getting action were extraordinary, so that the available accommodation was never less than overcrowded until well into the twentieth century. Callan Park (Rozelle) Hospital was completed in 1884, 21 years after it was first suggested. Bloomfield Hospital at Orange derived from a recommendation in an 1868 report; the land was dedicated in 1889 and the hospital built in the 1920s! Perhaps the best moral of this is that people of good will must be prepared to fight for what they believe for a lifetime. Callan Park, immense, meticulously planned and innovative for its time, represented an advance in humane psychiatric care. It is one of the outstanding heritage sites of the state for its architectural quality and its social history significance. Its future is now under the cloud of asset rationalisation.

Grace Karskens describes the political background to the construction in 1912 of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music within the shell of Francis Greenway's 1819–1821 Government House stables. It is an interesting early example of facade retention. The theme is the battle, represented by the Conservatorium, between 'true' culture and 'popular' culture, and the naive faith which the evangelists of the former had in its ability to improve (read, if you wish, 'control') the masses.

Carl Hopper, using the example of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, considers the important question, implicit in most of these essays, who are the 'public' in public works? He describes the short shrift given to tenants dispossessed by the demolition work, the exploitation of the bridge workers, and most importantly, the justifying myths that surrounded the project. His academic tone is tedious at times, and references to 'mythology' in the technical sense of Roland Barthes surely deserves a brief layperson's introduction. As with the Exhibition building and the modern Darling Harbour development, the verdict on the bridge must be complex. Who would argue now that it was not a worthwhile public work? So was it just an unlucky chance that it was the poor of Millers Point who lived in its path, and the rich of the North Shore who stood to gain? What inequalities are justifiable now for developments that posterity may, or may not, come to regard as indispensable?

Editor Lenore Coltheart concludes with an essay on artistic and philosophical views of the place of public works in the advance of 'civilisation' on the new continent. The imagery was pervasive, to the extent that the design of Wedgwood's Sydney Cove medallion (made in 1789 using clay from Sydney, and depicting Hope, Peace, Art and Labour at Sydney Cove) found its way into a stained glass window in Sydney's 1879 Public Works Department building. Her insights into the symbolism of typical early landscape views are useful for the reader without a fine arts background.

In editorial matters the book follows the high standards of its predecessors. The essays are pitched at the intelligent layperson, and the different authors' styles are mostly harmonious. Footnotes are useful but unobtrusive. The historic illustrations are numerous, well reproduced and have their own considerable interest, though it is disappointing that few of the essays use them, and there is little cross-referencing between text and illustrations.

So, who were the 'public' of public works? The book closes with the jury still out. Most of the examples are developments determined by, or built for, powerful or privileged elites. Four of the eight essays deal with the theme of public works as a form of exploitation or social control. But the chosen examples are highly unrepresentative. This book is not about the railways that opened up the country to capitalist grazier and small selector alike. It is not about the urban water supply developments that brought better living standards to all classes, or the tramways that brought the garden suburb ideal within the reach of the middle class in the twentieth century. The pictures of various rural public works with which the book briefly concludes suggest a whole different line of enquiry. Although the tales of exploitation in these essays inspire a healthy scepticism, perhaps the total picture is not quite as black as implied.

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P. Dorrell, *Photography in Archaeology and Conservation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989 pp.256, \$93.50, ISBN 0 521 32797 0

L. Adkins and R.A. Adkins, *Archaeological Illustration*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp.248, \$102.00 ISBN 0 521 35478 1

The volumes written and published to standard Cambridge University Press Manuals in Archaeology format are reviewed here together because they deal essentially with the same problem, that is the provision of a visual record of archaeological sites and artefacts, albeit by

different media. Even though both media are recognised as being central to all archaeological recording and publication, and important tools at the disposal of archaeologists, library shelves are not exactly groaning with the weight of books on the subject. None of those few books in existence on photography for archaeologists, as Dorrell points out, is of recent publication, in spite of the fact that there have been substantial changes in photography. Adkins' volume is unique in that it is the only text devoted entirely to the subject of archaeological illustration. Given the relative paucity of books on either of the subjects, the appearance of these manuals is therefore most welcome and long overdue.

The volumes bear the unmistakable imprint of having been written by practitioners. Dorrell's *Photography in Archaeology and Conservation* is based on lectures given to students at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, and on some thirty years' experience of prehistoric archaeological sites in Britain, the Mediterranean and the Levant. It is a handbook with a strong practical orientation, and represents a crystallisation of the author's philosophy on, and experience in, the uses of photography in archaeology both in the field and in the museums and conservation departments.

According to the Preface, the stated primary object of the book is 'to provide archaeologists and conservators with a guide through the complexities of modern photography'. A secondary objective is 'to give a background of archaeological and conservation practice for the many competent photographers, whether professional or amateur who, caught up in the fascination of the subject, want to use their skills to record the evidence of man's past'. The book is therefore aimed at a somewhat wider audience than the archaeologists and conservators its title suggests, to whom photography is an important research tool or means of presenting data to their peers. It is aimed also at serious amateurs and professional photographers who as part of a hobby or profession are interested in the subject.

The book contains 15 chapters, references and index. Its arrangement parallels the well established pattern of numerous other textbooks on photography in that it leads the reader from what might be termed the fundamentals of photography to practical implementation.

A brief but useful introductory chapter describes the evolution of archaeological photography, its origins illustrated with a few well chosen photographs of rare excellence which equal, if not surpass, those in many present-day reports.

The importance of matters technical is emphasised by the devotion of four chapters to this area. There are the chapters that one expects. They deal with topics such as image formation, lenses, camera types, exposure and its measurement, filters, exposing with flash, film processing and print making. Most of this information could be readily obtained from more generalised publications on photography, and yet Dorrell, through making the subject matter relevant to archaeological photography, manages to keep the reader interested. Inclusion of the basic principles of photography, reduced though they are to 'a resume of the terms and concepts most often used' which Dorrell considers necessary: photography, 'rather like the English language, is easy to learn and even easier to use badly'.

The equipment and techniques discussed in the technical chapters are put to practical use in the nine chapters that follow. It is in these that the main strength of the book lies. They provide abundant evidence of how the principles and methods presented in earlier chapters are likely to assist in the solution of archaeologists' problems, and give Dorrell the opportunity to share his considerable experience with

the reader. The range of applications described is comprehensive. Chapters 6 to 8 (Architecture and Standing Monuments; Survey Photography; Site Photography) deal with the practice of photography on site, while the recording of artefacts is discussed in chapters 9 to 12 (Principles of Object Photography; Principles of Close-up Photography; Ultra-violet and Infra-red Photography; Photographing Finds). The following two chapters address topics such as copying flat drawings, paintings and plans, and reproduction of photographs for publication.

Chapter 15 concludes the book with a glance at the future. Rightfully so, because after comparatively little progress over many years, the tools of photography have evolved rapidly, almost at a geometric rate, especially during the last decade. The micro electronic revolution has made most of these developments possible. It has allowed fully automatic exposure, automatic focusing, a switch to a liquid crystal display, more advanced flash facilities, and other time-and-effort saving features, incorporated in a compact and ergonomic camera design. In fact, today's cameras have so many built-in facilities that in the case of some models the problem (at least for this reviewer) now lies in finding a way of overriding a built-in automatic process in order to achieve other than uniform and unimaginative results. Films themselves have also seen considerable advances in recent years. The introduction of tabular habit silver halide crystals, the T-grain technology, as Kodak terms it, has resulted in the new generation films that afford distinct improvements in overall performance – fine grain definition, resolution and tone rendering, all of these attributes combined with greater speed. And then there is electronic imaging, the most profoundly significant development of the last decade. Dorrell adopts a somewhat neutral stance towards this shift to a new paradigm already in progress, the consequence of which may be the demise of the photographic silver halide image as we presently know it, in favour of totally non-film forms of image recording. He seems to be more concerned with the presentation of all present work for posterity in reliable archives. Therein lies a paradox. One specific advantage of electronic imaging is electronic image storage – the ultimate archive system. Such an electronic archive can store conventional photographs as easily as electronically recorded ones. The high-resolution CCD camera (and there are already quite a few models on the market that equal the standard of silver halide film quality) simply rephotographs ordinary prints or, better still, original negatives.

Leslie and Roy A. Adkins in their *Archaeological Illustration* look on photography with much less kindness. For them photography is not an ideal medium in archaeological recording and publication. They concede that a good photograph, in recording all that is visible to the camera, captures more of the essential features of the scene than the finest illustrator can record in hours of patient work. They point out, though, that it produces an unselective image or rather one in which selectivity of what is recorded cannot be controlled effectively. 'By contrast', the authors state, 'a good drawing selectively portrays the details that the reader needs to see and edits out irrelevant details, so that the illustration can be understood much more easily' (p.7). True, but one should not be so mesmerised by the inevitable subjectivity of illustration. Photography does carry an enormous load of information (around 8 million pixels in a 35 mm film image format, to use the terminology of electronic imaging), some of it superfluous, and yet precise information, that sometimes is not otherwise available. Whereas the determination of what is superfluous and what is important may change, the importance of photography is that it carries the information in spite of the observer's judgement, to be used perhaps

later. Thus there are many situations where photography constitutes an instantaneous, objective and historical record of the scene that cannot be provided by any other means.

The book's scope encompasses both conceptual and methodological issues. Its organisation is similar to Dorrell's, beginning with the historical development and the most basic equipment and skills (Chapters 1 to 3), proceeding to chapters addressing different illustrative techniques such as drawing in the field during survey and excavation, drawing artefacts, building and reconstructions, producing artwork for publication, and concluding with a chapter dedicated to the impact of computers on archaeological illustration (Chapter 10: Computer Graphics).

Thus in ten clear and concise chapters the authors cover all aspects of archaeological illustration. At times, in their attempt to be thorough, they include more detail than might be needed. One example is the information about appropriate equipment, as well as a guide to manufacturers and distributors in Britain (p.30-39). While this information may be of interest to some readers in that country, it is irrelevant to others, and it really does not add to the value of the text.

The book is primarily about archaeological illustration through the vehicle of the traditional pen and ink production techniques. Some readers may question the validity of these and regard them as anachronistic in the context of computer technology. Their concerns are addressed in the book's concluding chapter which accurately evaluates the impact of computers on archaeological illustration, argues the advantages and disadvantages, and offers some insightful advice for prospective computer users.

The volumes, written in a clear pragmatic style, extensively illustrated with halftones and line drawings of uniform excellence, cover the subject material thoroughly and in a comprehensive fashion. Neither volume, however, should be read in its entirety. For the most part, chapters should be regarded as modules. How you use them depends on how specific your interest or enquiry is. Each chapter is carefully footnoted, and the reader in need of more specialised and detailed information is pointed to the lists of references cited in ample number at the end of each volume, and (as best as I can determine) usually include the original and most authoritative work.

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D. Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Blackwell (Social Archaeology Series) Oxford, 1987, £27.50, ISBN 0 631 15605 4

Karl Marx explained his inspiration as 'turning Hegel on his head': Daniel Miller looks to the same source but, more in the manner of Auntie Jack, he rips Hegel's bloody arm off. Miller proceeds to carry away the limb and, through a series of rites that deserve inclusion in *The Golden Bough*, transforms the original phenomenologist's dialect of subject/object formation into a good theory about the contemporary social significance of mass consumption. This is a remarkable production, culminating in a rare application to contemporary cultural expression, and incidentally traversing a useful survey of the genealogy of modern material culture studies from the British perspective. Such as is known of this field in this country is predominantly from the USA, and it is salutary to observe the scene elsewhere in the world.

The element of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* in which Miller is grounded is the concept of objectification – the process of externalisation (or self-alienation) and sublation (or reabsorption) through which the subject is created and develops. Miller concludes with a rather narrower use of the term than Hegel, contrasting human society with human-produced artefacts. But others have employed the concept as well, and the accreted meaning with which writers such as Marx, Simmel, Mauss, Sahlins and Baudrillard have endowed the notion of 'objectification' require careful analysis in order to differentiate them from Miller's position. If not exactly a kleptomaniac, he is certainly eclectic.

Perhaps the major purpose of the book is to establish a legitimate place for the study of material culture. Not only has material culture been conspicuously absent from scholarly studies since the late nineteenth century, says Miller, but there is also a powerful, if diffuse, moral expectation that it must be materialistic, and hence tainted with false consciousness or at least, human alienation. This is truly engaging with a sacred cow of the politics and morals of our time, and one of the gifts of the study is a demonstration that it is a paper cow, a phantom. Miller suggests that, in reality, material culture is one of the significant forms of culture as the relation between human subject and external world, and that it tells much.

One of the novel aspects of this subtextual validation of material culture is an examination of the reasons for the invisibility of material things, both in life and academe. 'The deeply integrated place of the artefact in constituting culture and human relations has made discussion of it one of the most difficult of all areas to include in abstract academic discourse.' (p.130) This is the first analysis to venture beyond asserting the obvious and wringing one's hand about it; instead, it plunges boldly into the human psyche, following tracts established by Jean Piaget and Melanie Klein. There is an interesting suggestion that, as language takes over in expressing consciousness, objects may survive in the landscape of the unconscious. Miller concludes that Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London, 1984) is almost the only modern attempt to schematise the material world in terms of cognitive appropriation.

The red meat of the book is Part 3, 'The Study of Consumption'. Here Miller develops a theory of modern British mass consumption, again deriving from the Hegelian concept, this time that of the unhappy consciousness (the inability to recognise the social nature of social productions). Having acknowledged and reviewed Veblen, Mary Douglas and Bourdieu on the subject, he contrasts their approach with his own, which is to identify divisions among object domains which may constitute evidence about social relations. Examples of such divided domains are to be found in the extreme modernism of public housing projects (a style directly opposite the taste of people for whom the housing is intended); children's preference for inedible, 'anti-adult' forms of sweets such as frogs, snakes, milk bottles, flying saucers and skeletons; and the social bifurcation of motor scooters versus motor bikes – unintended by manufacturers, but generated by social groups (mods and rockers). Miller suggests that these examples show how various consumers use objects which would conventionally be interpreted as either the pervasive products of capitalism or as instruments of state control.

He calls such use 'recontextualization', and insists that it is different from resistance to oppressive dominance. In this way he hopes to present a positive value to contemporary objectification and consumption. Indeed, he concludes

with the proposal that consumption needs to be conceived as work, as a process of translating acquired objects from alienable to inalienable. This is the evidence that consumption is a major site at which personal autonomy can be made compatible with the social group.

That consumption is mass direct participation in the appropriation of contemporary culture is a bold idea, and attractive. It seems to me to contain rich possibilities for historical research as well as latterday popular culture, sociology and anthropology. The idea tantalises, and begs for further testing. Let us to work!

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K. Gurcke, *Bricks and Brickmaking: a handbook for historical archaeologists*, University of Idaho Press, Moscow Idaho, 1987; pp.xvi, 326, figures 38, \$US16.95. ISBN 0 89301 118 5.

Gurcke has a real talent for explaining technicalities. The first chapter, The Manufacturing Process, and the third chapter, Form and Function, cannot be bettered for explaining the complexities of the brickmaking process. Regrettably, the author has not been able to apply the same clarity of exposition to the so-called Industrial History in the second chapter. The first 30 pages of this chapter are actually case studies of the Pacific Northwest, and do not constitute an historical analysis of brickmaking. This is a small lapse in an otherwise excellent technical survey which should be of considerable utility to archaeologists working anywhere within the historical sphere of British influence.

The text of the handbook is relatively brief, taking up only half of the total work, while the rest is a detailed listing of brands in the United States and Canada. The author states oddly that 'the list is, of course, incomplete. It is especially deficient in listing common brick brands'. As it stands the list is enormous and includes brands found in the field but not known from directories. It is not at all clear how the brands listed were selected. I take it that they were all the ones known to the author, and that he honestly supposes there must be others. While this does credit to his integrity as a scholar, it is not really helpful to the outsider, and it might have been kinder to give us some estimate of the coverage (90 per cent, 50 per cent?). However, this is a minor quibble about a very painstakingly and probably useful checklist.

The problem with bricks, of course, is that many of them are not marked with any brand name, and it is here that Gurcke's work will be most valuable. His genuine understanding of the techniques of manufacture enables him to interpret very small variations in brick shape and surface, which in turn can help the archaeologist to decide whether the brick was handmade or machine-made, of soft mud or stiff mud, struck with a wooden or metal blade, end-cut or side-cut. The technical explanation is backed up by a detailed analysis of archaeological work on bricks in the Pacific Northwest of America. This is an excellent final chapter and makes up for the deficiencies of the history, which perhaps should have been included in this section.

Australian archaeologists have been quite well served so far as bricks are concerned. Brickmaking, after all, was one of our very first industries, with production in full swing less than six months after arrival of the First Fleet. Convict bricks have been much commented on and there is a good description in Higginbotham's paper on the Parramatta barrel-drain in the first volume of this journal. Technology has been well covered, though briefly, in Judy

Birmingham's fine chapter in *Industrial Archaeology in Australia*, now unfortunately out of print. Iain Stuart has given a brief history of the industry in Victoria in *Australian Archaeology* volume 24, and a list of New South Wales brick brands has been published in Warwick Gemmill's wonderfully titled *And so we graft from six to six: the brickmakers of New South Wales*, reviewed in this journal in 1987. There is also an interesting family history which gives a great deal of information on the social history of brickmaking in David S. Baker's *From Yeomen to Brickmakers*, also reviewed in this journal in 1988.

The very diversity of Australian works on bricks and brickmaking points up the need for a comprehensive textbook. Karl Gurcke's handbook goes a long way to satisfying this need, and Australasian archaeologists undoubtedly will find it a valuable reference tool. The bibliography is extensive and includes material from Britain and Canada as well as from the United States. The photographs are well chosen and adequately reproduced in this low-cost publication. They are an excellent complement to the text and illustrate the technical points clearly. There is no glossary, but the index is sufficiently thorough to guide the reader to the definition of most terms. Australasians should not be deterred by the detailed case studies of American Northwest industrial history and archaeology; there is much to be learnt from a comparison between these two provinces of the British material culture. The differences are great, to be sure, but there are some interesting similarities, such as the imported firebricks from Stourbridge in Worcestershire, well attested in the western United States, but also known in Australia at, for example, the iron-smelting blast furnace at Lal Lal, Victoria. The whole issue of technical similarities between Australasia and the American Pacific Coast deserves further study, and Gurcke's research should be useful not only to the identification of brick types and manufacture but also to the broader field of historical interpretation of industry.

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K. Townrow, *Survey and excavation of the historic sites on Macquarie Island: a report to the Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife, Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife*, Occasional Paper No.20, Hobart, 1989; pp.vii, 149. ISBN 07246 2137 7.

This report is the result of a five-week field season spent on the sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island in 1986-87, and a 12-month field season in 1988. The report contains a good brief background to the history of the island and the individual sites described in the text, and an account of the archaeological work carried out by the author. The fascination of Macquarie Island is here, the story of the sealing and penguin gangs abandoned for long periods with no possible escape, and the development of the penguin oil industry using technology unique to Macquarie Island.

The report well represents the novel attractions of Antarctic and sub-Antarctic archaeology: the need for penguin fences to keep out unwanted bird life, waterlogged soil often at freezing point, and poor logistics (Townrow had to transport all her own gear and finds around the island on her back). It also demonstrates the limitations imposed on the archaeological survival of material by the wallowing habits of the massive elephant seals.

The sites excavated are connected with the sealing and penguin period on Macquarie Island, which extended from 1810 to 1920. The work reported here is unfortunately

not yet complete, as the analysis of the excavated artefacts and identification of wood samples collected has not yet been carried out. As a result, some of the author's conclusions might be subject to review when that work is complete. However, some interesting findings have been made, such as the evidence, though the finding of identical artefacts at two sites, that contemporary linkages in use between sites on opposite sides of the island can be demonstrated. This information is not available through the very scant documentary records for the island.

The archaeology also helped in determining the methods of hut construction in some cases, and gave some indication of the range of artefacts used by the sealers. The huts of the earliest sealers were very crude, but standards of construction and the size of the huts improved throughout the century, though improvisation in building materials remained a common factor in this treeless environment.

Much of the text is taken up with the description of the various excavations. This reviewer found difficulty in some instances in interpreting the plan drawings of the excavations, some of which are not labelled, and which are not easily cross referenced to the text. I also have a quibble with some of the recommendations of the report. On the one hand, it suggests the return to Australia for display of the tryworks and digester plant from Hurd Point, while at the same time recommending the policy of leaving artefacts *in situ* unless they are under immediate threat, which those at Hurd Point do not appear to be.

On the whole, the report is a worthwhile addition to the growing literature on polar region archaeology, being a workmanlike account of useful research at often very disturbed sites undertaken in difficult conditions.

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B.A. Purdy, *Wet Site Archaeology*, Telford Press, Caldwell, New Jersey, 1988; pp.xiv, 338, illustrated, \$US32.50 paper, \$US50 case.

Conference papers are one of the best ways of catching up on or introducing oneself to a research theme or area of current work in archaeology. *Wet Site Archaeology* is an excellent example of this. It is the result of an international conference of the same name, held at Gainesville, Florida, in December 1986 with the sponsorship of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of Florida.

The 20 papers within the volume embrace the whole spectrum of issues relating to the excavation, conservation and interpretation of inundated sites. In addition, the contributors cover many of the regions in which investigation and research projects are currently taking place, including the Northwest Coast of the United States, Florida, Labrador, Chile, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Swiss lake systems, Herculaneum and the Pacific. They range in date from the late Pleistocene Monte Verde camp in Chile (13,000 b.p.) to settlements occupied well into the twentieth century on the Northwest Coast.

Wet sites are described as those which have become waterlogged after deposition, or where materials were deliberately placed in these locations. Shipwrecks are not excluded, but are certainly not well represented among the papers, perhaps in recognition that maritime archaeology deserves a conference unto itself. The characteristics of these inundated sites are described, principal among them being the preservation of organic materials, both of a cultural and an environmental nature. It is frequently

pointed out that these perishable items form a large percentage of the total evidence recorded, thus drawing to our attention what is seldom preserved in dry sites. It is this abundance of information which is at once the blessing of wet sites and their main problem.

On the positive side, wet sites have enabled some of the main advances in theory and research into the social and economic development of societies. Changes in the environment have for long been considered the prime cause for economic development, for example, from big-game hunting, through hunter-gathering to agriculture. The preservation of a more complete range of artifactual and environmental evidence allows for a greater confidence to be placed in social factors. This is the main thrust of the paper by S.E. van der Leeuw and R.W. Brandt on the Assendelver Project in the Netherlands, as well as B. Sigler-Eisenberg's paper on the Florida wetlands. These sites are at the cutting edge of the explanation of change using both archaeological and anthropological evidence, and indicate the simplicity of explanatory models when only the information derived from dry sites is available.

Wet sites also allow a broader picture of the past to be recovered. For example, the Late Pleistocene camp site or settlement of Monte Verde in Chile posed extreme problems in the recognition of the cultural modification of organic materials, reminiscent of the controversy that has surrounded stone tool technology and early hominid evolution. One of the most important surprises of this site, reported by the author, T.D. Dillehay, was the organic evidence for a society based on hunting and gathering, rather than the big-game hunting usually associated with the Palaeolithic. Elsewhere, R.J. Ruppe argues for the importance of submerged sites on the edges of the continental shelf for interpreting not only the global dispersal of people, but also the range of economic practices adopted by societies in the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Periods.

In more recent times, wet sites preserve both the structural remains of settlements and houses as well as a wide range of organic and inorganic objects distributed in specialised occupation and activity areas. This is exemplified by R.D. Daugherty's paper on the excavation of the Ozette Indian village on the Northwest Coast; by D.R. Croes' paper on the Hoko River fishing camps, also on the Northwest Coast; by B. Coles' paper on the Somerset Levels Project in South-West England; by J.A. Tuck's paper on the sixteenth century Basque whaling station on the Labrador coast; by Y.H. Sinoto's paper on an early settlement site on Huahine Island, French Polynesia; and by M.S. Gilliland's account of the nineteenth century archaeological exploration of Key Marco, Florida.

The recovery of detailed evidence extends to the well preserved remains of human flesh, clothing and ornaments. The paper by S. Biesel on the skeletal material recently recovered from Herculaneum, though important, seems strangely out of place in the discussion of wet sites. The bodies were discovered on the historic shoreline, the people being killed in their vain attempt to escape the volcanic eruption of A.D. 79. Far more appropriate is the discussion and interpretation by J. Coles of the human remains preserved in the bogs of northern Europe, including Tollund, Graubolle and Lindow, the latter being the most recently discovered. Of similar importance is the account of the Windover mortuary pond in Florida, dated to 7000 b.p.

On the down side, many of the contributors refer to the difficulties posed in obtaining sufficient funding to pay for conservation of organic material and the research programs of a multi-disciplinary team of specialists, including palaeo-

botanists, palynologists and the like. There is only one paper of a technical nature, by D. Grattan, on the conservation of wood, but even this reviews the range of techniques in historical sequence, while confining specification to endnotes. In addition, specialised excavation techniques had to be developed to suit each individual site, and a number of papers give details of siphons, pumps and other equipment. The results of wet site archaeology far outweigh the expenses involved.

Finally, B. Purdy, J. Coles and others refer to the threat of drainage and development on wet site archaeology. Nowhere is this exemplified more than by Coles' discussion of the lack of awareness of the Irish authorities to the destruction of well preserved prehistoric landscapes through peat extraction on a grand scale. Public education is advocated, and detailed site surveys are needed to evaluate the resource. As an example of what can be done, an account is given by G. Stickel and E. Garrison of one of the first site surveys using remote sensing equipment to locate submerged terrestrial sites. Side scan sonar, magnetometer, and microwave radar were employed to determine signatures for known archaeological sites on Lac de Neuchatel, Switzerland, before being used to identify new sites.

However the lesson for all of those who practise archaeology in Australia is clear. There is an urgent need to seek out and evaluate all sites, including wet sites, by means of site survey. Archaeologists also should be aware of their responsibility during excavation to recover and conserve all available evidence from inundated deposits, and not turn a blind eye to environmental data, even on dry sites. This volume therefore serves a dual purpose, not only to broaden a too blinkered approach to historical archaeology, but also to encourage a higher standard of excavation through the examples of others.

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J. Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940*, Read Methuen, Auckland, 1986, pp.246.

Architectural history is an area of scholarship which is closely related to historical archaeology in both its subject matter and its method of enquiry. Yet those archaeologists who have had occasion to use architectural history texts in the course of research are likely to have been disappointed by the irrelevance of the buildings discussed, and horrified by the methodology employed. Unfortunately, this important area of study was for a very long time the preserve of antiquarian dabblers more given to stylistic theorising than to archival research.

This state of affairs has changed in recent years. The discipline of architectural history now wears the historian's stout pair of boots as comfortably as the architect's bow tie, and its current generation of writers are as scrupulous in their handling of evidence as those in any other branch of history. Architectural history has also undergone the same broadening and egalitarianising as other historical fields of enquiry. Whereas once its subject matter was the major buildings of the rich and famous, there is now considerable attention being devoted to the study of builder-designed houses, both primitive and industrially mass-produced construction methods, the effect of government subsidies for mass urban housing, the diffusion of mainstream architectural styles down the market, and other topics directly relevant to the 99 per cent of buildings which earlier architectural historians ignored.

Jeremy Salmond's book on the history of domestic architecture in New Zealand illustrates the current state of the art, and can be recommended as a model for anyone about to take up the study of a particular class of buildings in a particular region. The book's subject is the broad variety of houses right across the consumer's range of prices and taste; there are boring houses here as well as interesting ones, and nasty houses alongside the pretty ones. It is chronologically structured, so that the reader can follow the evolution of New Zealand houses through time, and copiously illustrated with line drawings and photographs, both modern and historic.

The scope of the book is ambitious, from sealers' huts of *raupo* to modern waterfall fronts, and only the relatively small scale and population of New Zealand enable Salmond to cover the ground so competently in a volume of this size. He does not dwell on rare or eccentric examples, but plainly acknowledges that the vast majority of houses were built to a small range of plans by standard techniques, which are described in detail. The book demonstrates a clear knowledge of the working of the building industry, enabling Salmond to avoid the fallacies of geographical determinism by demonstrating that house designs were imported in trade publications, and the choice of materials was dictated for most of the population by its labour cost.

Of particular relevance to an Australian audience is the fact that the majority of New Zealand houses are of timber, and the construction methods, details and many of the designs described here are familiar in those parts of Australia where timber also predominates. Also directly transferable is the background information on building components; timber milling, glass manufacture, nails, bricks, fences, gutters and downpipes are all dealt with at a length proportional to their significance in New Zealand houses. Salmond's line drawings will be widely plagiarised as teaching aids, for the illustrations of house forms, cutaway views of construction techniques, joinery catalogues, weatherboard cross-sections and rubble masonry terminology are as clear and concise as any available. This nuts-and-bolts approach to the subject makes the book a valuable introductory manual to the topic of historic buildings generally, even for people who have no need or desire to know about those of New Zealand in particular.

There are limits to the utility of this information, however, and one must be cautious about relating the general technical background to specific examples. Salmond makes use of catalogue illustrations, such as the superb engravings of sawmilling machinery in G. Lister Sutcliffe's *Modern Carpenter Joiner and Cabinet-maker* of 1903, and while these are a useful depiction of the type of plant available to a steam-powered sawmill at the turn of the century, it is not established anywhere in the book that these specific machines were present in New Zealand. This may or may not become a problem to someone in future, depending on what conclusions are now drawn from the reproduced illustrations by a careless reader of this book. Nor can every statement be trusted implicitly; to say that corrugated iron was being 'manufactured' in Dunedin in 1869 surely requires qualification. This presumably means that corrugations were being rolled in imported galvanised sheets, for even Australia, with its much larger population and abundant coal and iron ore, did not manufacture a single sheet of corrugated iron until 1921.

While much of what Salmond says translates easily into Australian, there are some cultural perceptions which will be unfamiliar. The 'Pacific Basin' as a cultural entity is not a concept which comes easily to many Australian historians, most of whom think of the Pacific as a diverse and mostly alien environment, with little collective impact

on Australia. Yet this book itself illustrates very clearly the existence of nineteenth century links in at least the English-speaking Pacific basin. To an Australian, many New Zealand houses look very American in their styling and details. The timber enrichment has the flavour of American vernacular about it; the Carpenter Gothic of New Zealand is from American rather than English pattern books; the Stick Style is a faithful copy of an American fad which never reached Australia; and the up-and-down houses of Wellington are surely direct imports from San Francisco! While Australian architectural historians are happy to acknowledge American influences in Australia in the twentieth century, this close look at New Zealand houses may cause some to seek further back, and to look at what the builders, as well as the architects, were doing.

Why should an archaeologist read this book? Because it is a useful reference tool for people who deal with buildings and historic sites. It thinks of houses not as plans on an architect's drawing board, but as artefacts of the building industry, and as habitations. It describes changes over time, the technological evolution, spatial diffusion, as well as

how all the bits of a house fitted together, and what they did while they were there. If you are dealing with the site of a demolished house, this book will help you estimate how many bricks were on the site, where the kitchen stove stood, whether the drains were likely to have been of earthenware, how they built the fireplaces, and what gasfittings the house had. That is if you are in New Zealand. If you are in Australia, it will not be quite as helpful, but it is well worth knowing about. Australia needs a book like this, too.

Personally, I gained a useful (and delightful) expression from the book. Just finding out that the stuff for which none in Australia has thought up a more convenient name than 'finely fluted corrugated iron' is known in New Zealand as 'sparrow iron' made reading it worthwhile.

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## THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY INC

The Australian Society for Historical Archaeology was founded in 1970 to promote the study of historical archaeology in Australia. The Society encourages archaeological research on historical sites, buildings, artefacts and relics by appropriate means including historical research, survey, recording, excavation and analysis and the publication of the results of such research. The Society supports the conservation of sites and relics which are part of the Australian heritage.

The interests of the society include historical sites, buildings and relics reflecting all aspects of life in Australia from European contact until the present.

The Society aims to promote the exchange of information, research and reference material relating to historical archaeology, within Australia and overseas. The wide range of historical archaeology in Australia is reflected in ASHA's publications: *Studies in Historical Archaeology*, a series of *Occasional Papers*, volumes based on the papers from the Annual Conference, the *Research Bulletin*, the quarterly *Newsletter* and the annual *Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*.

The Society's activities include public lectures and an annual conference which provides a forum for speakers from throughout Australia and overseas. Members of the Society receive the quarterly *Newsletter*, the *Research Bulletin* and the *Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology* as part of their subscription.

Membership is open to all those interested in historical archaeology at both amateur and professional levels.

Subscriptions to the Society are as follows:

Individual membership (per annum) \$25.00  
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