



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 101

December 2010

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at
Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 1 December 2010

**Richard Costin (Whale Researcher, Naturalist, Documentary Film
Maker and Photographer)**

Annabelle Sandes (Whale Researcher, Artist and Photographer)

“Whales and the Kimberley Coast”

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Jeff Gresham, Mike Donaldson & Roger Passmore (Bushwalkers)

“Bushwalking in the Kimberley Region”

Wednesday, 2 March 2011

Ed Hatherley (DEC) and Sarah Legge (Australian Wildlife Conservancy)

“Monitoring Fires in the Kimberley”

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meeting.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

ART EXHIBITIONS

Until 12 December, *Kimberley by Kohan: Kimberley Kohan* can be viewed at Kingfisher Gallery, 49 Colin Street, West Perth. See www.kingfishergallery.com.au for 23 great images that include bold new works.

Until 19 December, Stafford Studios, at 108 Forrest Street, Cottesloe, will be presenting new works by the acclaimed realist painter Michael Challen. See www.awaag.org.au/stafford.htm for an image of 'Blue Horizon, Lennard River'. The exhibition is one of the last at the gallery, which Marlene Stafford is closing after 22 years.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last three months has seen a number of significant announcements that highlight the competing issues of industrial development and environmental preservation in the Kimberley. In early September the Premier, Colin Barnett, announced details of the Master Plan for the development of the Browse LNG Precinct at James Price Point, located approximately 60 km north of Broome. The land area impacted would be 2500 hectares and a further 1000-hectare marine area for a port and shipping. All but two kilometres of the coastline in the vicinity of the precinct would remain open and accessible to the public. On the day of this announcement the Premier also announced that the State Government was to trigger a compulsory acquisition process to acquire the land for the precinct. However this announcement clearly stated that, although the process of compulsory acquisition had been triggered, the State Government would prefer to sign an Indigenous Land Use Agreement based on the consent of the parties involved and encouraged the claimants to resolve the issues within their groups.

On October 22nd the Premier and the Minister for the Environment announced the formation of the Kimberley Wilderness Parks. The new parks will include four marine parks, a new national park and additional conservation reserves. The Camden Sound Marine Park, covering an area of 7062 square kilometres and embracing the calving habitat of the humpback whale, is to be the first marine park to be established. An Indicative Management Plan for the park was released for public comment. In addition to the marine parks the Prince Regent Nature Reserve is to be upgraded to a class A national park. A conservation corridor will also be established to connect the newly created national park with the existing Drysdale River National Park. The Prince Regent and Drysdale areas are two of the remotest, pristine areas of the Kimberley. Although access to these areas will remain difficult for all but the most intrepid amongst us, the proposals are a major step forward in ensuring the environmental preservation of this unique part of our State.

As December approaches we can look back on a very active and productive year for our Society. The History Seminar held in March was a great success and the compilation and editing of papers presented at the seminar is well advanced. It is planned to produce a publication containing these papers in the first half of 2011. The 100th edition of the Boab Bulletin, containing a series of beautiful landscape paintings of the Kimberley, was received with acclaim by our members. The quality and content of the presentations made at our monthly meetings were of a very high standard. I would like to thank all Council members for their support during the year and also others who assisted in the running of our monthly meetings. I would take this opportunity of wishing all our members a safe and happy festive season.

Jeffrey J Gresham

KIMBERLEY WATER

With southern Australia facing continuing and increased water restrictions, various people are calling for water to be taken from the Kimberley to Perth. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in Canberra has articulated why that action is considered inappropriate in a publication titled *Moving water long distances: Grand schemes or pipe dreams?* The 28-page booklet can be seen online (www.watercorporation.com.au/_files/Water_future_moving_water_long_distances.pdf) or in print (request through Waterinformation@environment.gov.au or on 1800 218 478).

THE FAR NORTH – A VIEW FROM SPACE *with a remote sensing short course*

On 6 October 2010, the Kimberley Society's presentation was more technical than usual with Dr Matt Adams from Landgate's Satellite Remote Sensing Services (SRSS) proving an interesting evening on the applications of satellite imagery in the Kimberley region. Remote sensing makes it possible to collect data on large-scale and inaccessible areas. Dr Adam's presentation informed the audience that SRSS, located at Floreat, is a unit of Landgate, the Western Australian Land Information Authority. SRSS has teams involved in environment, agriculture, research & development, emergency management, satellite processing systems and online delivery.

Dr Adam's presentation concentrated on the applications employed in the Kimberley region that include emergency management (fire and flood), agriculture / pastoral management and Landmonitor.

Commencing with some fundamentals of Remote Sensing, he explained the definitions of spatial, temporal and spectral:

- ❖ Spatial pertains to the size of a pixel that is recorded in an image – typically pixels may correspond to square areas with sides ranging in length from 0.4 to 1,000 metres.
- ❖ Temporal being the measurement of time is the frequency of flyovers by the satellite over a given location. These range from 0.5 hours to bimonthly.
- ❖ Spectral is the intensity of light (wavelength width) at different frequency bands.

The services provided by SRSS are dependent on the appropriate processing and analysing of remote sensing data with computer software. The basis for multispectral data collection and analysis is that of examining areas or objects that reflect or emit radiation and stand out from their surroundings.

Dr Adams explained that SRSS applies thermal detection to detect fire hot spots and scars that assist organisations to track, manage and control fires Australia wide. Landgate provides online services to view current and archived fires that are overlaid with other land information such as cadastral or topographic data. Access to the 'FireSpots' and 'FireWatch' web services is <http://firewatch.landgate.wa.gov.au/>.

Another SRSS service is 'Floodmap', which is funded by the Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme (NDMP). This applies remote sensing technology in an emergency risk management approach to flooding in remote areas. It seeks to mitigate the impact of floods on communities by integrating meteorological, hydrological and geospatial information with remote sensing data to provide timely flood intelligence and forecasting capabilities. Access to the 'Floodmap' web service is <http://floodmap.landgate.wa.gov.au/>.

SRSS also provides the capacity to measure pasture growth rates and compare week to week, year to year pasture growth rates using the web-based 'Pastures from Space' service. This valuable resource for land managers allows them to monitor pasture growth rates, land degradation, soil quality, salinity and crop yields.

Dr Adams concluded his presentation with a demonstration of how Remote Sensing was supporting the Kununurra Ord River Irrigation project by providing high resolution imagery for essential measurements of crop growth, indicators for water, and weed and insect problems.

Jeff Murray

REST IN PEACE

Maureen Muggeridge, who led the team that discovered the Argyle diamonds deposit in 1979, died at the age of 62 on 7 October after collapsing as she took samples on Napier Downs Station. An obituary by Torrance Mendez, published in *The West Australian* on 28 October, included the following comment: "In the constellation of diamond mining, Maureen Muggeridge was one of the brightest stars and her written outpourings on the subject were studied the world over."

Weaver Jack, who was a senior artist and one of the Yulparija people at Bidyadanga, died in Broome on 6 October. Born at Lungarung out near the Canning Stock Route in the Great Sandy Desert in about 1928, she migrated to the coast in the 1960s to be with her sister. She continued to live a traditional life, with her art often relating to the Lungarung desert, and she was the first indigenous artist to be shortlisted for the Archibald Prize. The selection of her self-portrait 'Weaver Jack in Lungarung' as a finalist was contentious because it was a traditional indigenous non-figurative landscape. Yet, as Emily Rohr from Short Street Gallery in Broome pointed out, the artist saw herself and her country as one.

Shirley Hands, one of the Kimberley Society's founding members, passed away on 19 September. Her long and busy life included a Minderoo Station childhood on the Ashburton River, schooling at Perth College, working as a journalist, farming at Boyup Brook with her husband John, and writing *The Challenge and the Chance: The Colonisation and Settlement of North West Australia 1861-1914*. Her funeral was conducted at Minderoo Station on 26 September, followed by a memorial service at Perth Chapel on 1 October. Shirley leaves a brother Don Forrest, sons David, Lincoln and Richard, and many other family members and friends.

BOOK NOTE

***Golden Land of Silence: A tale of the Kimberleys* by A.O. Neville. Hesperian Press, Carlisle (WA), 2010. Soft cover, 171 pages, images, ISBN 978-0-85905-479-9, RRP \$30.**

This novel, published decades after the death of its author, sits well with other early works that include Zane Grey's *Wilderness Trek: A Novel of Australia* (1944), Arthur Upfield's *The Cake in the Hat Box* (1955), and Jon Cleary's *Justin Bayard* (1955). Like those books, its central characters are non-indigenous people working in a setting that brings them into contact with indigenous people. There are also parallels with Richard Dehan's *The Sower of the Wind* (1927), Katherine Susanna Prichard's *Coonardoo: The Well in the Shade* (1929), Tom Ronan's *Vision Splendid* (1954), and Mary Durack's *Keep Him My Country* (1955). Like those books, this one revolves around the social taboos, angst, and ramifications that were commonly associated with sexual liaisons between indigenous women and non-indigenous men.

The setting, seemingly in the 1920s or 1930s, is Crystal Head Government Native Station, which the author positions adjacent to the mouth of the Mitchell River and 100 km from the fictitious town of Hunter River. In the foreword to the book, Derrick Tomlinson points to the likely link with Munja Aboriginal Reserve, which incorporated the former Avon Valley Station. He also mentions Neville's visits to Munja.

Golden Land of Silence is most likely to attract attention because Neville was Western Australia's Chief Protector of Aborigines (1915–1936) and the state's first Commissioner of Native Affairs (1937–1940). It does, however, deserve to be read in its own right.

Cathie Clement

AWARDS, PRIZES AND HONOURS

Two recipients of Australian Honours in the 2010 Queens Birthday list were mentioned in the August newsletter but a third one who was recognised partly for a contribution to the Kimberley was overlooked. Ian James Williams was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for “distinguished service to the Indigenous community of Western Australia and Queensland through the establishment of training programs providing sustainable employment in the mining industry, the promotion of social responsibility and as a supporter of business development initiatives”. His contribution included being one of the founding trustees of the Gulganyem and Kilkayi Trusts, the two trusts established under the Argyle Diamond Mine’s Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Miriuwung and Gidja traditional land owners of the Argyle lease in the East Kimberley.

Another of the founding trustees also received recognition, back in 2007. Mrs Evelyn Nyirrmaria Hall, who passed away last year, was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for “service to the Indigenous community as an advocate for land rights, social justice, and the economic advancement and education of traditional owners in the Kimberley region”. Mrs Hall was a senior Miriuwung law woman and was one of the key negotiators of the Argyle Agreement. Thanks go to Kimberley Society member Sue Boyd for bringing these honours to our attention.

In the 2010 Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science, the \$50,000 Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year has been awarded to Dr Katherine Trinajstic. The prize recognises outstanding achievements made by early career researchers. Dr Trinajstic, who has worked with Gogo fish fossils from the WA Museum since 1995, noticed traces of soft tissue in some of those fossils and devised a way to study it. The results changed people’s understanding of evolution after a combination of CT scanning and synchrotron light revealed not only organs and soft muscle tissue but also a 380-million-year-old foetus within a Gogo fish, still attached by its umbilical cord. The accepted date from which vertebrates gave birth to live young was immediately taken back some 200 million years.

Mary Victor O’Reeri, a Broome primary school teacher, is the finalist in the Local Hero category of the West Australian of the Year awards. She received her award in the lead-up to the 2011 Australian of the Year Awards, which will be announced in Canberra on 25 January. Ms O’Reeri was recognised for her work and leadership as a suicide prevention advocate in her community at Billard, which is near Beagle Bay. After losing two brothers through suicide two years apart, she convened the inaugural Blank Page Summit at Billard in 2009. People from throughout Australia attended and they devised ways to create grassroots action plans that tackle the factors contributing to the high risk of suicide among Indigenous people.

In the 2010 WA Tourism Awards, Kimberley operators were again prominent. Willie Creek Pearls, which is owned and run by the Banfield family, received the coveted Sir David Brand Award for Tourism. The 26 categories of awards that offer medals for high achievement included: Festivals and Events – Argyle Diamonds Ord River Muster (gold); Ecotourism – Pearl Sea Coastal Cruises (gold) and Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat (silver); Indigenous Tourism – Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat (gold), Home Valley Station (silver), and Uptuyu Adventures (bronze); Visitor Information and Services – Kununurra Visitor Centre (bronze); Tour and/or Transport Operators – Kimberley Wild Expeditions (gold) and Pearl Sea Coastal Cruises (silver); Tourism Education and Training – Home Valley Station (bronze); Unique Accommodation – Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat (gold); Deluxe Accommodation – Kununurra Country Club Resort (gold) and Habitat Resort Broome (bronze); Luxury

Accommodation – Pinctada Cable Beach Spa Resort (gold) and Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism – Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat (the winner). All of the winners will compete in the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in March. At the gala function that celebrated the WA awards, it was notable that the six operators inducted into the WA Tourism Awards Hall of Fame included Willie Creek Pearls and Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa. The inductions recognise the achievements of operators who have been winners in their categories three times over a number of years. Willie Creek Pearls excelled, with its induction being for multiple wins in three categories.

At the Top Tourism Town Awards, which were held in Bridgetown in October, Broome took out the main prize. Kununurra was also in the limelight with Narelle Brook, general manager of the Kununurra Visitor Centre, named as Visitor Centre Manager of the Year. Kununurra is to host next year's awards.

FOOTBALL UPDATE

There has been little to write this year about Kimberley football players in the AFL.

West Coast Eagles drafted Lewis Broome who is from Looma and Gerrick Weedon from Broome. Both are on the rookie list. The September *Eagle Eye* – the official West Coast Eagles publication – stated that Lewis Broome had two unfortunate hamstring injuries during the season which had restricted his appearances. Gerrick Weedon had also had injuries which had limited his pre-season. He had been playing in the forward line and has kicked a few goals.

However the great news is that both players took part in the Claremont Reserves winning the grand final over East Perth, kicking two goals each. Lewis Broome won the Lewis MacIntosh medal for best on ground although commentators on Sport FM Radio thought that there were several players ahead of him. He won the best player in the Colts grand final last year so perhaps we will be able to mention him more next year.

I am uncertain as to whether there are any Dockers players from the Kimberley but if anyone wishes to address this issue they are more than welcome to.

Jack Vercoe

BOOK NOTE

Work by Peter Bridge at Hesperian Press has resulted in the publication of six booklets containing articles written by William Campbell Charnley during and after the 1920s. The Kimberley-content booklets are *Pigeon* (ISBN 978-0-85905-006-7), *The McGuire Mystery: Killers of the Kimberley coast* (ISBN 978-0-85905-008-1), *Major the Outlaw* (ISBN 978-0-85905-003-6), and *The Tragic Pearl* (ISBN 978-0-85905-019-7). The length of these illustrated articles ranges from 18 to 27 pages, and each booklet also contains a biographical note on Charnley. In the note, Peter Bridge writes: "Many of his articles on bush history are in the style we tend to think of as the 'Idriess genre,' but where their subject was identical, Charnley was the chronological leader by many years, and in greater detail. His literary 'mistake' was to write articles rather than books." The saddle-stitched booklets, printed at A5 with stiff card covers, retail at \$8 each.

Cathie Clement

MARINE SCIENCE NEEDS FOR THE KIMBERLEY

On 1 September 2010, the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI) showed a small documentary, Under Kimberley Waters, to the Kimberley Society meeting.

Chairman of the WAMSI Board, Dr Peter Rogers, gave a presentation about the work of WAMSI and what it hoped to achieve in future research. Also in attendance from WAMSI were the Communications Manager, Sue McKenna, and Events Co-ordinator, Lynne Stephenson. WAMSI provided the notes that follow.

Kimberley research high priority for WA's Marine Science Institution

Independent scientific studies in the beautiful and remote Kimberley marine region have been identified as a priority by the Western Australian Marine Science Institution's Board.

The Kimberley is a region of intense natural beauty where few formal, long-term marine baseline studies have been instigated.

The first indications of the latest exploratory research are predicting that there will be many hundreds of new marine species discovered from the shallow waters of the continental shelf out to the deep ocean. Initial information has shown that some reefs have new sponge and coral species on them.

A long remote coast, three thousand islands at low tide, thousands of reefs and sponge gardens, numerous atolls and sweeping mangroves distinguish the region. Most have not been seen, recorded, catalogued or analysed by scientists.

Massive 11-metre tides driven by the elliptical pull of the moon occur in the Kimberley.

All of this has historically been largely hidden from public view and general awareness.

The Kimberley has been out of sight and out of mind for most people but its proposed new whale sanctuary and other iconic features are now attracting the attention of the world.

"We hope that the future of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution's (WAMSI's) research will be largely concentrated in the Kimberley-Browse marine region," Dr Steve Blake, WAMSI's Chief Executive Officer, said.

"Sadly, we know more about the surface of Mars than we know about the Kimberley underwater world."

WAMSI, through its 15 partners, has 250 scientists working on 87 research projects along the 13,500-kilometre WA coastline. Most of the work to date has been between Exmouth and Rockingham.

Topics which will be of great human benefit – biotechnology, identifying new marine species, sustainable fisheries, biodiversity, coral ecology and the effects of climate change – are being studied.

A focus on the offshore Kimberley region has been promoted by WAMSI since 2008 when it released an open report calling for more research in the Kimberley. *A turning of the tide: science for decisions in the Kimberley-Browse marine region* was written by Professor Mike Wood and Dr Des Mills and presented to the State Government by WAMSI.

"It's rare for leaders to face decisions about the future as complex as those involving the cultural, environmental, economic and social values in this region," Dr Peter Rogers, Chairman of the WAMSI Board, said.

“Scientific information should be the lifeblood of one of the last great wild and rugged marine region on earth – a region where natural gas processing, tourism, fishing, infrastructure and port developments will need to co-exist.

“The absence of independent regional marine and coastal research could ultimately be to the detriment of the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of the region.

“It will be most marked in the Kimberley-Browse marine region which historically has very limited fundamental marine biodiversity and other baseline data.”

He said WAMSI – which began in 2006 – had put in a Major Research Institutes funding application to the State Government for the second stage of WAMSI. Another research organisation linked to WAMSI, the Integrated Marine Observing System, had also put in a funding application and, if successful, would use the funds for ocean monitoring using state-of-the-art instruments in the Kimberley offshore region.

“Results from WAMSI’s work in the past four years are already being used by decision makers tackling the questions of coastal developments, industry requirements, fishing, Indigenous heritage and conservation,” he said.

“It will hopefully augur well for the proposed next stage of research in the Kimberley offshore region.

“We’ve accomplished much more than a single agency could ever do alone by providing holistic results from research teams based in universities, government agencies and private industry. I think that that’s something which the community can be proud of.”

WAMSI’s partners are the WA Department of Environment and Conservation, the WA Department of Fisheries, the WA Department of Industry and Resources, The University of WA, Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University, Curtin University of Technology, the Chemistry Centre, the WA Global Ocean Observing System and the WA Museum. Federal partners include CSIRO’s Wealth from Oceans Flagship, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the Bureau of Meteorology, and foundation industry partners are Woodside Energy Limited and BHP Billiton Petroleum.

If you would like to know more about WAMSI, please visit the website www.wamsi.org.au Information on the Kimberley region can be found on <http://www.wamsi.org.au/category/region/research-kimberley>.

BOOK NOTE

***Droving with Ben Taylor: Up and down the Canning Stock Route in 1946* by Len Hill. Hesperian Press, Carlisle (WA), 2009. Soft cover, 224 pages, images, maps, ISBN 978-0-85905-472-0, RRP \$33.**

When boss drover Ben Taylor offered 18-year-old Len Hill a place on a team taking brumbies and camels up the Canning Stock Route, and then bringing cattle back down, Len jumped at the chance. His diary of the trip provides an interesting account of the droving, and it comments on some of the stations around Halls Creek as well as those further south. The book, which is indexed, also contains some verse.

Len Hill is a retired Kimberley pastoralist. In one of the book’s three appendices, he offers his analysis of Shoemith and Thomson losing their lives on the CSR.

Cathie Clement

DREAMING PEARLS AND PASTURE: MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE KIMBERLEY

On 5 May 2010, Corioli Souter, a curator from the Department of Maritime Archaeology at the Western Australian Museum, spoke to the Kimberly Society about some of the Museum's work. Her summary of the presentation follows.

The Kimberley is currently being assessed for inclusion on the Australian National Heritage List. This area has also been identified as highly prospective for oil and gas resources. These potentially conflicting interests have sparked a number of studies of the environmental and cultural diversity of the Kimberley coast and archipelagos. This summary presents further interpretation of what began as a government commission to assess shipwrecks in the Kimberley region as part of this heritage listing. The range of maritime sites is far broader than initially anticipated and cannot be looked at in isolation from both the historic and contemporary Aboriginal cultural history. The cultural history of the Kimberley coastline, a region once solely occupied by Aboriginal people and later visited by maritime peoples from the Indonesian Archipelago, European explorers and eventually exploited by pearlers, pastoralists, guano miners and missionaries, is complex. Kimberley sites investigated to date primarily relate to first colonisation of Australia and ongoing contact. The inland Kimberly has yielded the earliest dates of human occupation; 46,500-43,500 BP and 47,500-44,000 on the Devonian limestone reef systems at Carpenter's Gap (in Windjana Gorge National Park) and Riwi (in the Mimbi Caves). Similarly, rockshelter sites on High Clifty Island in the Buccaneer Archipelago demonstrate antiquity for Kimberley island occupation (7000 years BP). Little work, however, has been undertaken in relation to archaeology of the contact and post-contact periods.

Historical archaeological studies undertaken to date have been opportunistic and rudimentary, largely due to the inaccessibility of the area. However, we can still discern three distinct overlapping phases of regional activity for the contact and post-contact periods.

1. Historical Indigenous activities (prior to European exploration and settlement until the present). Maritime connections between Aboriginal people and past visitors can be seen in the local rock art. Eighteen watercraft images have been identified (and put in the public domain through publication) in the Kimberley region.

2. South East Asian seafaring activity and trepang harvesting (last few hundred years until 20th century). From at least the 1720s until the early 1900s fleets of perahu sailed from Macassar in southern Sulawesi to the northern Australian coast each year to collect trepang or bêche-de-mer. This trade began well before European colonisation of the Australian continent, and involved significant contact with Aboriginal people. Evidence of Macassan fishing activity is documented in Dutch archival records, in recorded contact with other Europeans, and also from the results of archaeological investigations. Site types include trepang shore processing camps, trypots, fireplaces, shelters and shelter foundations, remains of smoke houses, charcoal concentrations, introduced plants, graves and shipwrecks.

The Indonesians referred to the Kimberley as Kaju Jawa. The British Navigator, Matthew Flinders met the Macassan trading fleet further to the East in Arnhem land where he also observed archaeological sites on islands and the mainland. In 1838, Stokes discovered a broken jar on Turtle Is off Port Hedland, which may indicate that Indonesian seafaring extended to the southern end of the Eighty Mile Beach region. While fishing for trepang was the primary purpose for visiting the Kimberley, Macassans also collected pearl shell, pearls, minerals, sandalwood, dugong, clam meat, and turtle shell. Collecting trepang continued into the 20th century, so great

care needs to be made to ensure that more recent archaeological remains — such as scatters of metal, glass and ceramic artefacts — are not dismissed as those of Europeans when they may relate to this important Asian activity in Australian waters.

3. European exploration and activities (both prior to the foundation of the British Swan River Colony in 1829 and, later, in the colonial era). Tasman's voyages contribute to the first interpretation of the Kimberley coastline. William Dampier careened his ship the *Cygnets* in King Sound in 1688 making his the first British landing on the Australian continent. Phillip Parker King conducted three surveys from 1819-1822. King's first contact with the indigenous population took place in Vansittart Bay in 1819 (Jar Is and Encounter Cove). King surveyed Montague Sound and named a number of islands and features after his crew, and careened his leaking vessel the *Mermaid* at Careening Bay, Port Nelson in September 1820. The French were also active along the Kimberley coast in the early nineteenth century and explorers such as Baudin, in 1803 record his making contact with Indonesian fishers at Cassini Is.

Pearling began in the north-west in 1864 as a shore-based venture rapidly growing to a vessel-based industry extending from Banningarra Creek at the southern end of Eighty Mile Beach to northern shores of King Sound. The majority of shipwrecks relating to this industry are located in the Eighty Mile Beach (66 recorded losses) and Broome (131 recorded losses) areas although we know pearling vessels operated speculatively up and down the north western Kimberley coast up until the c. 1930s. Another unexplored site type can be found where the camps of pearlers and shellers were dotted along the coast.

Two decades after reports of the agricultural potential of the Kimberley by the explorer Captain George Grey, the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association was formed in Melbourne in 1864 with a capital of £20,000 "to settle a very superior, well-watered pastoral and agricultural country around Camden Harbour by placing one head of cattle on every thousand acres". Approximately 70 settlers bought shares in this venture and sought to farm the area arriving on the vessels *Stag*, *Helvetia* and *Calliance*. By February 1865, with the arrival of the government resident Robert Sholl, the settlement was drought stricken and suffering heavy stock losses. It was abandoned in October 1865 after the last of the sheep had perished.

Research into past contact

Beyond the failed pastoral settlement of 1864–1865, this region has the potential to reveal material evidence for Aboriginal, European and Indonesian culture contact. A preliminary survey was conducted at the Camden Harbour settlement and its environs in October 2009 to identify some of these features. Historical archaeological survey work had not been undertaken since 1978, when the focus was on the European elements of the archaeology only. The archaeological assemblage at Camden Harbour along with descriptions contained in European journals clearly demonstrates the contemporaneity of these culture groups—neither of which has been explored in any detail. Aboriginal accounts passed down in oral tradition also provide a different perspective to events, including interpretations of shipwreck events. New research angles are required to better understand the more recent historical events of the region which to date, have been Eurocentric in interpretation. Our current aim is to investigate with communities what sites are best suited to assist us in our understanding of contact between Aboriginal people and outsiders over the last few centuries.

A longer version of this summary, with references, is expected to be published elsewhere in the near future. When that occurs, the *Boab Bulletin* will provide the publication details.

ANNUAL GIBB RIVER ROAD MOUNTAIN BIKE CHALLENGE

'The Gibb' was once the preferred route for drovers moving cattle from the interior of the East Kimberley to the deep port facility at Derby. Now it is a favoured road for four-wheeled drivers and the last great frontier for adventurers including mountain bike enthusiasts. The annual Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa Gibb River Road Mountain Bike Challenge, which commenced in 2007, is the inspiration of Police Sergeant Simon Rimmer, the Kimberley District Training Officer based at Broome. This year's event was held over five days from 23 to 27 May.

This unforgiving road through an ancient and beautiful land attracts mountain bike enthusiasts each year. The event starts in Derby and finishes at the pristine El Questro pastoral station, after travelling 645 kilometres to the Great Northern Highway turn-off to Kununurra. The Gibb River Road is not normally a place where you would expect to find cyclists, but once a year the dusty and sometimes muddy trail is home to this now infamous team relay event with 374 riders from all over the country participating in 2010.

This mountain bike challenge is fast becoming one of the most prestigious mountain bike stage events in Australia. The rider registration fee of \$350 includes all meals, camping, wilderness park fees and a cycling top. Teams entering the challenge are required to raise a minimum of \$1,000 for charity, with half of the money going towards WA Police Legacy and the other half going to a charity of choice.

The personal and team rewards of participating in the Gibb River Road Mountain Bike Challenge are to realise the tremendous community spirit amongst riders, the social competition, spirit of adventure and personal accomplishment of completing each stage.

The intended format for the Challenge is teams consisting of two to six riders. By dividing each stage into 12 – 20 kilometre segments the riders are able to maintain performance levels and contribute towards their team's success. Teams representing schools, police stations, local government, health services and corporate businesses from throughout the Kimberley region and around Western Australia participate.

The daily riding stages of the 2010 Challenge were:

- (1) Derby to Imintji Aboriginal Community: 225 km
- (2) Imintji to Mount Elizabeth homestead: 104 km
- (3) Mt Elizabeth to Ellenbrae homestead: 138 km
- (4) Ellenbrae to Home Valley homestead: 114 km
- (5) Home Valley to Great Northern Highway: 64 km, then drove back to camp at El Questro for the end of Challenge celebrations.

This year two Kimberley Society members, Jeff Murray and Karen Kruit formed a team of six to participate in the Challenge. Even though the Challenge is not a race, once you mix bikes, dirt, mud, river crossings and testosterone the competitive streak comes out and team tactics play a major role! The riders flew through their transitions in relay format so that the next pair was fresh and raring to go. Our team changed lead several times a day so the energy level was maintained. At the end of each stage it was time to cheer the finishers and share a well earned drink and rest.

Jeff Murray

Editor's note: For keen cyclists less intrepid than Jeff and Karen, the Great WA Bike Ride will be held from 19 to 27 March 2011. It starts and ends in Manjimup, covering 560 km with overnight stays in Pemberton, Karridale, Margaret River, Dunsborough, Busselton, Balingup and Nannup.

BOOK NOTES

My reports of the Kimberley offerings in the A4 series of historical works published by Hesperian Press have lagged badly. *Pioneers of Nor'-West Australia: Pastoral and Pearlring* by Lockier Clere Burges senior, originally released as reminiscences in 1911, was reprinted in 2008. Burges went north with the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association in 1864 and was thus in a position to comment on events that included the deaths Panter, Harding and Goldwyer near Lagrange Bay. The 28-page volume (ISBN 978-0-85905-438-6) is indexed and retails at \$15.00.

In *The Mount Minnie Mystery & A Midnight Melee*, edited by Peter J Bridge with Gail Dreezens, the second and longer of the two parts is about a 1920 cattle drive from Streeter's station near Broome. It is a contemporary account in which the writer cites witness statements and evidence from a coronial inquest and a trial at which one Kimberley man, Charles Athelstone Park, was found guilty of the wilful murder of another, an Aboriginal drover known as Big Bob. *The Mount Minnie Mystery* is about the disappearance of two men near Onslow in 1925. The 36-page volume (ISBN 978-0-85905-425-6) is indexed and retails at \$22.00.

A third 2008 release was *The Drover's Scrapbook* edited by Peter J Bridge and Gail Dreezens. This 127-page volume (ISBN 978-0-85905-428-7) provides an invaluable collection of anecdotes, reports and reminiscences about drovers and their work in WA from the 1880s to the 1950s. It is indexed and illustrated, contains a small map showing stock routes, and retails at \$30.00.

Paddy the Flat: The life of Patrick Leahey Australian hero, prospector, publican, and fighter for Digger rights contains historical and biographical material collected and edited by Peter J Bridge. Paddy Leahey, as well as being a storekeeper at Halls Creek in 1886 and walking 2,764 miles to visit that goldfield again in 1895, was known on goldfields across Australia. The 29-page illustrated volume (ISBN 978-0-85905-065-4) was published this year and retails at \$16.00.

Cathie Clement

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