



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 107

December 2011

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 7 December 2011

Professor Lyn Beazley AO FTSE (Chief Scientist of Western Australia)

“The Amazing Kimberley – A Science Perspective”

Provisional Program for 2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1 Feb	Jeff Gresham and other bushwalkers	River Tales
7 Mar	Kimberley Toad Busters	Cane toads
4 Apr	Betty Foster (ex-MMA air hostess)	1960s & Kununurra
2 May	Rachel Siewart (Australian Greens Senator)	James Price Point
6 Jun	Clay Bryce (WA Museum)	Zoological research
4 Jul	To be advised	
1 Aug	Russell & Matt Barrett (Kings Park)	Botany
5 Sep	To be advised	
3 Oct	Mark Moore (University of New England)	Stone tool manufacture
7 Nov	To be advised	
5 Dec	To be advised	

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

There have been three recent events that have highlighted the wonderful diversity and importance of Aboriginal art from the Kimberley. At the direction of his estate, an auction of 26 of Paddy Bedford's paintings was to be held in Sydney and, despite a downturn in the Aboriginal art business, the sale of some of Bedford's work has created significant interest in the art world. I was fortunate to see Bedford's retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in late 2006 and rate it as one of the best exhibitions I have ever seen. The discovery of an early Rover Thomas painting in the US recently was widely reported and no doubt it will bring a significant sum if it is sold at auction. Finally in Perth we have been lucky to have had the opportunity to attend the exhibition "Yiwarra Kuju – The Canning Stock Route". This outstanding exhibition displays the work of a number of artists, some of whom were displaced from their country due to the development of the stock route. In addition it provides a history of the route's development and information of the fauna and flora along the route. It was something of a shame that this exhibition was open for only such a short time but hopefully it will return to Perth in the future. In the meantime details are available on the National Museum Australia website at http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/yiwarra_kuju/. It is well worth seeing and the sponsors of the exhibition are to be commended in supporting such an important event. Aboriginal artists from the Kimberley are amongst the best in the country.

The development of the monsoonal pattern over the Kimberley (Kalumburu has already had 231 mm of rain in November compared to the monthly average of 80 mm) signals the onset of another wet season. As to whether the early heavy rains in the region signal another "big wet" like last year's is uncertain but climatologists are predicting increasing rainfalls across northern Australia. The onset of the wet season also signals the approach of Christmas and the end of another year of activities for the Society. The presentations made at our monthly meetings were of a sustained high standard and covered a spectrum of interesting subjects associated with the Kimberley. The editing and design process for the Proceedings Volume from the History Seminar held last year has taken a little longer than anticipated but I am confident that the delay in publishing the volume will be offset by the very high quality of the final product. It should be available to members and the public in early 2012. I would like to thank Council members for their ongoing support during the year and for those members who assisted with the successful running of our monthly meetings.

I would take this opportunity, on behalf of Council, to wish all our members a safe and happy festive season and the very best for 2012.

Jeffrey J Gresham

SIXTY YEARS OF SERVICE

On 2 December, a Broome morning tea will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Sisters Veronica McCarthy and Philomena Hockings. Both made their religious vows as Sisters of St John of God in Broome, having travelled there from Perth in 1949 on a DC3. Their 'Milk Run' journey took 10 hours, the usual duration for that run.

The Sisters of St John of God have been in Western Australia since 1895. A Deed of Appreciation for their contribution to the state was recorded in *Hansard* on 24 March 2011. Mr John Castrilli (Bunbury–Minister for Heritage) read the ministerial statement and, in a speech that followed, Mr Tom Stephens (Pilbara) mentioned Sr Veronica and Sr Philomena in his acknowledgment of their order's enormous contribution.

SCIENTIFIC & INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES OF WOLFE CREEK METEORITE CRATER

On 7 September 2011, John Goldsmith presented an illustrated talk on Kandimalal (Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater) in the East Kimberley. John is conducting PhD research at the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (www.icrar.org), Curtin University, Western Australia. His research focuses on cultural astronomy and the sharing and communication of Australian Indigenous sky knowledge. His presentation notes follow, with **text and images** © **John Goldsmith**.

Cultural Advice: Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this document contains the name of a person who has passed away.

Wolfe Creek Crater

Wolfe Creek Crater is one of the best preserved and most spectacular meteorite craters in the world. It is a highly significant site for scientific research. The site is one of the few locations in the world where local Indigenous knowledge and culture relates directly to the meteorite crater. In addition to the scientific value of the crater, the site has also become an important tourist attraction.

Location

The crater is situated at latitude 19° 10' 18.2" S and longitude 127° 47' 43.56" E, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, approximately 130 km south of Halls Creek, on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert. The crater is accessed by the Tanami Desert Road, a gravel road which links Halls Creek to Alice Springs. The crater is protected by a National Park and is managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation.



Aerial view of the crater.

Origin and Formation

Astronomers speculate that the original meteorite which formed the crater was probably an iron meteorite weighing thousands of tonnes. The tremendous speed of the meteor on impact caused a massive blast, comparable to a nuclear explosion, resulting in a circular crater almost 900 metres in diameter and 150 metres deep.

The impact probably occurred more than 300 000 years ago. Since then, the process of erosion has slowly worn down the crater walls. Windblown sand and dust has partially filled the crater floor. However, the crater walls remain quite steep, and in places there are sheer cliffs, particularly on the inner side of the north-eastern crater wall. The crater walls presently stand about 40 metres above the surrounding flat plain, and the almost flat crater floor is 60 metres deep; about 20 metres below the surrounding plain.

The outer portion of the crater floor is sandy, while the central portion consists of salt deposits. Sink-holes are located near the middle of the crater, and some water is present virtually all the year.

Although some small iron meteorite fragments have been discovered in the vicinity of the crater, very few particles of the original meteorite have survived. During the millennia which have passed since the impact, the meteorite has largely rusted away.

Recognition of the crater by non-indigenous people

The first non-indigenous recognition of the crater occurred as recently as 1947. Alex Bevan and Ken McNamara note in their book *Australia's Meteorite Craters* that F Reeves, NB Suave and D Hart observed the crater from the air during an aerial survey of the Canning basin, in 1947. A field visit took place two months later.

Site visits by John Goldsmith

My interest in Wolfe Creek Crater began mainly through astronomical photography. In May 1998, I carried out my first visit to the crater, where I accomplished night landscape images of the crater, and astronomical photography during the Eta Aquariid meteor shower (originating from Halley's Comet). One year later, in 1999, I returned, together with Aboriginal Elder Jack Jugarie (of "The Human Race" documentary fame). I recorded video interviews with Jack Jugarie, regarding his knowledge of the crater and the night sky. Subsequent visits have extended this work further, with visits in September 2000, July 2003, August 2010 (collaborating with Gingin Observatory) and August 2011, with Jack Jugarie's Eldest son, Keith Jugarie.

Aboriginal perspectives of the crater

The Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater is known as "Kandimalal" to the Jaru Aboriginal. The crater is recognised in stories, personal experience, knowledge, art and song by Jaru and Indigenous people. Elders of the Jaru Aboriginal people refer to several stories relating to the crater, known locally as Kandimalal. One well known story refers to the passage of two rainbow snakes which formed the nearby Wolfe Creek and Sturt Creek as they crossed the desert. In the Dreamtime, one snake emerged from the ground, forming the crater.

In 1999, I recorded a story which relates to a “star” which fell from the sky and became buried in the ground, causing the crater to be formed. As explained by Elder Jack Jugarie, one day, the crescent moon and the evening star passed very close to each other. The evening star became so hot that it fell to the ground, causing an enormous explosion, flash, dust cloud and noise. This frightened the Jaru people and a long time passed before they ventured near the crater to see what had happened. When they ventured to the crater, it was realised that this was the site of where the evening star had fallen to the Earth. The Jaru people then named the place “Kandimalal”.

Interestingly, this story closely parallels our current understanding of crater formation by large meteorites (referred to as the “evening star” which fell to Earth in the Jaru story). Elder Jack Jugarie indicated that this account was passed on from his grandfather's grandfather, which suggests that the story originates from before the first contact with white people.

Elder and artist Stan Brumby has represented the story of the star which fell to the earth in numerous ways via his art. Examples are shown in the fully illustrated version of these notes, published on the Kimberley Society's website.

Another story refers to the underground "tunnel" linking the soakwaters in the centre of the crater, with Sturt Creek. This story has been represented in several Aboriginal paintings.

Crater photography

Photographic documentation of Wolfe Creek Crater is a very useful method, which allows viewers to gain an appreciation of the visual form of the crater, and the particular features of the crater shown in Aboriginal art.

A substantial photographic record of the crater has been developed, including astronomical photography, timelapse, 360 degree photography and timelapse animation, during my site visits. The digital photography documentary methods used are described by my paper in *Rock Art Research* 2011.

Numerous night-time timelapse sequences have now been achieved, from locations including the western, southern, northern and north-eastern rim of the crater. Digital photographic methods are used, with typical exposures being between 20 to 30 seconds duration, and continuous sequences ranging from 1 to 5 hours duration. When converted into High Definition (HD) video, these sequences reveal the apparent motion of the stars above the crater landscape.

Several photomosaic panoramic images have also been achieved, with this method being highly suitable for recording high resolution, extreme wide angle views of the crater.

Several 360 degree images of the crater have been achieved to date. These unique images are 360 by 180 degree views of the crater, from various locations, including from outside the crater, the western, northern and eastern rim, and also several images from the crater floor, including the soakwater areas near the centre of the crater. The 360 degree images are used to create a virtual tour of the crater, where viewers can explore the crater at several locations.

In August 2011, a unique experimental animation was achieved. A sequence of more than 470 images were taken (2.5GB), during a four hour walk around the rim of the crater, during daylight. The images have been animated into an experimental video sequence, which shows the centre of the crater from all angles.



Looking toward the "South Celestial Pole", stars appear to rotate clockwise during the photographic exposure. The crater is illuminated by strong moonlight.

Further reading

Bevan, A., (1996) "A Blast from the Past", *Landscape Magazine*. Vol. 12 No. 1 Spring 1996. Published by the Executive Director, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.

Bevan, A. & De Laeter, J., (2002) "Meteorites, A Journey Through Space and Time". University of New South Wales Press.

Bevan, A., McNamara, K., (2009) "Australia's Meteorite Craters". Western Australian Museum. Perth, Western Australia.

Goldsmith, J., (2000) "Cosmic Impacts in the Kimberley" in *Landscape Magazine* Vol. 15 No.3 Autumn 2000. Published by the Executive Director, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.

Goldsmith, J., (2011) "Documenting Natural and Cultural Places with 360° Spherical Images, Panoramic and Timelapse Digital

Photography. *Rock Art Research* 2011 - Volume 28, Number 1, pp. 123-127.

Editor's Note: Editor's Note: Two of John's timelapse sequences of Kandimalal, Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater, can be seen on The World at Night website <http://www.twanight.org> where he and other photographers have galleries. The first timelapse shows the stars while the second shows a night view of streaming clouds and stars above the crater. Also featured is a still image titled 'Stars above the Bungle Bungles', and a long time exposure titled 'Baobab Startrails'. The video exhibit of the crater is now showing at the Gravity Discovery Centre (Cosmology Gallery).

John's web site www.celestialvisions.com.au also features a 360 degree image of the crater. Also impressive is that the opening ceremony of CHOGM in Perth in October 2011 featured his timelapse vision of the southern stars and setting moon descending over the Pinnacle formations at Nambung National Park, WA.

BOOK NOTE

***Dry Grass Whispering* by Norah Kersh.** Private publication (Boolarong Press, Moorooka, Qld), 2010. Soft cover, 202 pages plus xiv, illustrated (some colour), map. ISBN 978 0 9579285 1 0. Recommended retail price \$24.95.

With more than one third of its content devoted to an account of life at Balgo, this book represents a significant departure from Norah Kersh's usual output. A one-time Creative Time Residential Fellow with the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust, she is best known for her Outback series of educational books for children. That series, characterised by colourful covers and appealing illustrations, began with *Outback Alphabet* (1999 & 2009) and includes *Outback Countout*, *Grandma's Precious Chest*, *Outback Songs*, *Outback Doctor* (with Russell Ousley), and, most recently, *Outback School* (with Coreena Lucas & Nicky Cooper).

Dry Grass Whispering, which has a foreword by Frank Brennan S.J.A.O., gives a brief overview of the author's childhood (in western NSW), education, social life and marriage to John Kersh at Warren, NSW, in 1964. The couple moved from one grazing property to another as John gained experience working with livestock. Then came Balgo, which they envisaged in 1967 as an opportunity to do volunteer work for a couple of years but found to be 'seven years of challenge, fun and hardship'.

Driving through the outback in a station wagon for eight or nine days with two-year-old Sean and six-month-old Matt was no picnic but Norah's diary entries reveal a strong spirit and a keen interest in the people and places they saw *en route* to Balgo. The mission is introduced with quotes from a letter written by Phillip Cox about the early days. When Norah and John arrived, Father McGuire was the administrator. The St John of God nuns were Sisters Francis, Veronica, Anthony and old Andrew whose 'brown-skinned little angels of the desert sang nursery rhymes with a Scottish accent!'

John had been engaged to oversee the establishment of a cattle station for the mission. While he set about that job, Norah taught kindergarten with the help of 16-year-old Nancy, a local girl. After their prefabricated house was built at the mission, Norah and John welcomed the assistance provided by Muntja and her husband Mosquito. Many other people, including John Shoobridge, Jack Carroll, and Norah's nephew Peter Waterford, pop up as the story continues. These cameos provide glimpses of how things were done in this remote locality. Extracts from letters written by John tell of the progress with the cattle, and a short chapter is devoted to the construction of the homestead on the cattle station. Located about 80 miles (128 km) from the mission, it was 75 miles from its nearest neighbour, Mongrel Downs.

Dry Grass Whispering is both a family chronicle and an account of life in parts of Australia that include the outback. Its coverage of Balgo is welcome because too little has been written about that place and about this 'period when the old ways for both tribal people and Kimberley station people in general, were changing'. The detail throughout is seldom extensive but the coverage is broad, interesting and informative. Some is amusing and some is terribly sad. The final third of the book tells of the family's return to NSW and a subsequent move to Queensland.

Copies of the book are available from outlets that include Kimberley Bookshop (Broome) and the Halls Creek Visitor Centre. Kimberley Society members who are unable to access an outlet can send \$24 to the author at PO Box 1195, Thuringowa Central, Qld 4817 if they wish to receive a copy by mail (with the postage generously included in the price).

Cathie Clement

WORLD PREMIERE OF THE WHITE DIVERS OF BROOME

The Black Swan State Theatre Company will be presenting in its program of 2012 "The White Divers of Broome" from 28 January until 16 February. This play by Hilary Bell was commissioned by the Black Swan State Theatre Company as part of the Rio Tinto Black Swan Commissions. The premiere will be a Perth International Arts Festival event.

Promotional material mentions the fat years of Broome's pre-World War I pearl shell industry coinciding with a national call to promote a white Australia. Broome, it says, owed its wealth to the cheap, 'coloured' labour that collected mother-of-pearl from the hazardous seas, and that led to the following situation:

When the Australian Government discovered this one remaining pocket of racial diversity, they demanded the Asians be replaced with British navy divers. The master pearlshellers fiercely opposed having to employ white divers and entered into opportunistic alliances with the Asian crews to resist the newcomers.

"The White Divers of Broome" is described as being a fast-paced celebration of boom time Broome with its unique beauty, exotic mixture of cultures and the seductive power of its landscape. More than that, it's a stirring account of isolation, non-conformity and survival in a harsh and relentless environment. An insert entitled "Black Swan's Coming of Age" by Kate Cherry says 'Hilary Bell will sweep you along in this epic and heartbreaking story and take you back to a time when the racial and class relations in the exotic frontier town of Broome were watched by the entire country.'

The play goes for 2½ hours and includes coarse language and adult themes. You may well have read the book of the same name – the inspiration for the play – and also a similar theme is contained in the *Drowning Dream* by Peter Burke.

Jack Vercoe

FOOTBALL WRAP-UP 2011

There is some good news and some slightly sad news in this report. The good news is that in the WAFL grand final where Claremont 19 – 13, defeated Subiaco 10 – 11, Kimberley players Alroy Gilligan kicked 3 goals and Gerrick Weedon 1. In the reserves Lewis Broome kicked 1 goal when the Tigers defeated the Demons by 20 points. Sadly there was a report in *The West Australian* on 26 October that Lewis Broom has quit the Eagles and gone back to Looma to live.

However there appears to be a new star on the horizon. This is a young man called Waylen Manson who had extensive reports in the *West* on 25 October and 9 November. In another article some weeks earlier he was referred to as the Halls Creek kid. In fact he really comes from Billiluna which is 180 km south of Halls past Wolfe Creek crater.

In the game between the Waratahs against Wanderers in the Northern Territory Football League, Waylen kicked 10 goals, after kicking 8 goals the previous week, and he had been in the AFL draft combine in Melbourne just preceding that. He is described as a 195 cm key forward from Billiluna. In a previous match he was Best On Ground in the landmark country football championships and kicked 5 goals, not to mention kicking a match-winning goal after taking a mark in the goal square. In two Colts games playing for Claremont he kicked 12 goals 9. It sounds like he could be a high pick in this year's AFL draft so watch this space for next year.

Jack Vercoe

BOOK NOTE

***The Dying World in Northwest Australia* by Helmut Petri.** Hesperian Press, Carlisle (WA), 2011. Soft cover with jacket, 276 pages plus x, illustrated. ISBN 978-0-85905-091-3. Recommended retail price \$45.

Published by Albert Limbach in 1954 as *Sterbende welt in nordwest Australien*, this volume has been translated by Dr Ian Campbell. It has a foreword by Susan Bradley (of Doongan Station in the Kimberley) and an introduction by anthropologist Kim Ackerman. The foreword explains the collaborative effort that went into the translation and the editing, and it stresses the importance of the work to both scholars and the Aboriginal people whose culture it covers. The introduction provides background on Helmut Petri and context for his 1938–1939 study of the Ngarinyin (in the north-west Kimberley) and the Nyigina (in the lower Fitzroy River basin). Ackerman writes in part:

At the time of study and writing Petri envisioned a dim, if not grim, future for the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley... In his later writings Petri was to acknowledge that the dynamics of cultural change rather than being totally destructive averted stagnation and facilitated cultural renaissance and continuity.

As the leader of the first Frobenius Expedition in Australia, Petri viewed his subjects as culturally discrete groups affected by both their region's recent history and their ongoing contact with Europeans. His writing, as well as offering great insight into the indigenous people's culture, philosophy, and daily life, also reveals a little about the race relations prevailing at the time of his visit. He comments, for example, on 'the black twist introduced by the whites' and on how that tobacco could influence the Aboriginal people's decisions about where they would go and whether they would accept invitations to work at missions and on stations.

The volume comprises three parts. Part 1 introduces the Ngarinyin and discusses their material culture. Part 2 moves on to their spiritual culture. Part 3 is devoted to the Nyigina and their mythical view of the world. All of it is written in an easy to read narrative style in which bold subheadings signal topic changes, e.g., Part 1 topics include weapons, tools, household utensils, watercraft, forms of dwelling, binding material, and adornment. Stories or myths appear in connection with some topics, and nicely executed sketches occasionally depict weapons or other objects. Figure 4, for instance, shows a bush bucket or karáki, which Petri describes as 'the most striking and remarkable household implement in the Central Kimberley'. Sometimes a note points the reader to one of the 20 plates at the end of the book. The plates show people, ceremonies, weapons, cultural sites, shelters, rock art and more.

Petri draws on the published works of his fellow expedition member Dr Andreas Lommel, the Reverend J. R. B. Love from Kunmunya Mission, and the anthropologist A. P. Elkin; often comparing his findings to theirs. With regard to the Ngarinyin, he notes that, even with only ten years separating his visit from Elkin's, 'the ancient native culture was in many respects becoming more fragile'.

The coverage of the Nyigina relates mostly to their social organisation and their myths. Petri acknowledges that it is only 'a fragment' and explains that two of his three informants 'were living at the Beagle Bay Mission ... and had spent many years of their life with the Nyol-nyol, whose homeland was there'. The other informant was part of the Ngarinyin community. While Part 3 is likely to interest some Kimberley Society members less than the earlier parts with their coverage of rock art, many are likely to find the book appealing in its entirety.

Cathie Clement

REST IN PEACE

On 8 September, former RFDS flight nurse **Gaye Richardson** died in Hollywood Private Hospital, Nedlands, aged only 62. An obituary by Torrance Mendez, published in *The West Australian* on 31 October, captures her feisty nature, which, despite a diagnosis of breast cancer, saw her compile the book *Nurses with Altitude*. Completed in 2008 for the 80th year of the RFDS, with 92 contributions from 67 staff, it quickly sold more than 2000 copies with all royalties going to the RFDS. Gaye was based in Derby while she was with the RFDS but she later worked in the UK, Europe, Venezuela, and around Perth. She is survived by her husband Terry and their daughter T-J.

On 19 October, after a brief illness, 69-year-old **Buddy Tyson** died of cardiac arrest at Kununurra District Hospital. Hailed by Nathan Dyer as 'a larger-than-life Kimberley cowboy' in *The West Australian* on 28 October, Buddy had been both a rodeo clown and a winner of State titles on the Australian rodeo circuit. His riding career began early. Put on a horse before he could walk, he spent his childhood droving stock with his father in Queensland. Other jobs followed but he then spent 30 years droving and working on stations across the Top End before going to El Questro Station as a stockman and tour guide in the 1990s. Once there, his engaging personality, whip cracking prowess, and legendary yarns earned him celebrity status as he entertained an endless stream of visitors at "Buddy's Rest" and the Swinging Arm Bar.

On 5 November, **Amat Bin Bakar** passed away in Broome aged 79. An obituary, written by his son Mark, with Torrance Mendez, was printed in *The West Australian* on the 16th. It told of an eventful life that started with a frugal Buddhist upbringing and included working on the Singapore wharves before travelling to Broome, aged 14, to work for Streeter and Male. Amat's roles with the pearling fleet included working as a tender for the divers and as a bosun in charge of more than 100 men. He also spoke seven languages and 'came to represent the multiculturalism that is now a byword for Broome'. In addition to Mark, Amat Bin Bakar leaves another son and two daughters, his wife Phyllis, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

COUNCIL 2011-2012

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