Defining the Fringe of Contemporary Australian Archaeology

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Pyramidiots, Paranoia and the Paranormal

Edited by

Darran Jordan and Rocco Bosco

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Australian Archaeological Association
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
ANZAAS	Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
APC	Armoured Personnel Carriers
ASAL	Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation
DECC	Department of Environment and Climate Change
DECCW	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water
DSTO	Defence Science and Technology Organisation
ELDO	European Launcher Development Organisation
EMF	Electromotive Force
HAD	High Altitude Density
IEAust	Institution of Engineers Australia
IGY	International Geophysical Year
kg	kilograms
km	kilometres
m	metres
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Services
NSW	New South Wales
OEH	Office of Environment and Heritage
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TARDIS	Time and Relative Dimension in Space
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
US/USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WRE	Weapons Research Establishment

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CHAPTER ONE

THE LEGACY OF AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGY

ROCCO BOSCO AND DARRAN JORDAN

Introduction

The relationship between core and fringe is one that frequently defines (and regularly redefines) many varied disciplines, primarily through opposition and juxtaposition. Those elements that constitute either core or fringe are not set in stone; instead their landscapes are fluid and capable of rapid change. The primary difference between them in contemporary archaeology is defined by process rather than content, with the core adhering to applications of scientific method. Logic is applied to empirical or measurable evidence in order to reason about the past when archaeology is approached as a science (Johnson 1999, 34-47). As a result the accepted centre rests on a foundation of scholarly peer reviewed publications.

The shifting of this core may be undertaken through what physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn described as a paradigm shift (1962). Such a shift ideally consists of the disproving of a scientific theory and its subsequent abandonment in favour of another which better fits the available data. As theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking noted: "each time new experiments are observed to agree with the predictions the theory survives… but if ever a new observation is found to disagree, we have to abandon or modify the theory" (Hawking 1988, 11). This process is the basis for the majority of contemporary archaeological theory and practice, for as archaeologist Matthew Johnson stated: "in one sense there is no argument about whether archaeologists should be scientific. If science is about the rational accumulation of knowledge, assessed in rigorous, systematic ways, then we are all scientists," (Johnson 1999, 37). While this may be largely true at the core of the discipline, it is not the case further out on the fringe.

Consideration of fringe archaeology evokes a number of popular culture representations. Films, television programs, interactive games, comic books and other forms for the transmission of creative narratives, have produced multiple fictional representations of archaeology that draw heavily on concepts produced by the fringe. Multi-media characters like Indiana Jones and Lara Croft continue to misinform the general public about the discipline of archaeology, populating it with the crystal skulls of alien creatures (Spielberg 2008) and mythical objects such as Pandora's Box (de Bont 2003). Erich von Däniken's work has made popular the assertion that God was an astronaut, or as he put it, that: "older intelligences could have paid a visit to our Earth in the dim mists of time" (von Däniken 1968, 176). This idea crystallised popular representations of archaeology in a way that continues to frame contemporary fiction about the discipline. It also led to the coining of a disparaging term used by academic archaeologists to categorise fringe theorists - pyramidiots.

The terms pyramidiots, pyridiots and pyramidologists are used to describe practitioners of pseudo-science. Narratives that have gained popular appeal through pseudo-science works include that aliens built the pyramids of Egypt (von Däniken 1968), that the ancient inhabitants of Atlantis built pyramids using now lost anti-gravity technology (Childress 1996; 2003), and that the shape of the pyramids themselves were used by ancient Egyptians to channel supernatural powers (Toth and Nielson 1976). Not only do these fringe theories utilise mythology, science-fiction and paranormal content for their narratives, they also evoke paranoia through tales of government cover ups and the suppression of the unbelievable truth as a method of explaining why these ideas are not accepted by the academic core (Clark 2011; Hopkins 1996). While a scientific approach discards earlier theories that are no longer workable, popular culture approaches are unaffected by paradigm shifts and regularly resurrect long discarded narratives and concepts, which can be used to bolster arguments primarily rooted in belief and emotion.

While it is easy to discount the works of pseudo-science and fringe theories as unproven and unsubstantiated at best, sensational and inaccurate at worst, the impact they can have through replication in popular culture make them a potential threat to the successful dissemination of academic information. The so-called war on science that occurred during popular debates on climate change provides a cautionary tale. Despite the weight of academic conclusions in peer reviewed articles, the persuasive abilities of politicians, radio presenters and television personalities proved much more effective at steering public opinion during such debates (Mooney 2006). A

lack of interaction with wider popular culture by most scientists meant that emotion and faith could be wielded by those more proficient with mass communication, to challenge the validity of the scientific method itself.

Archaeology as a discipline is uniquely positioned to control its own narratives, as its origins lie both in humanities and the sciences. Creative tools have been used both to explore ideas about the past and to communicate different interactions with the material record (Brown, Clarke and Frederick 2015). Consideration of the shifting relationship between core and fringe in contemporary archaeological theory and practice in Australia, led the editors of this book to convene a session on the subject at the 2015 Australian Archaeological Association conference. The resulting papers and discussions led to the production of this volume. While the focus of this work is geographically situated within Australia, the repercussions of its contents are equally applicable to contemporary archaeology worldwide.

Amateur Archaeologists

One way that archaeologists have sought to interact with the general public has been through the controlled involvement of enthusiastic amateurs. In this context the term amateur archaeologist refers to any person partaking in archaeological investigations, who does not have corresponding qualifications. Museums and universities have drawn in those with an interest in history and archaeology, using trained professionals to guide and inform members of the general public about heritage. National Geographic have run an online program of non-invasive survey through the use of aerial imagery which actively seeks assistance from and guides members of the general public in looking for clues on satellite images in the region of Genghis Kahn's lost tomb (Lin 2010). Through programs with editorial control, volunteers can greatly aid archaeological enquiry and gain further education and experience themselves, but there is a danger that without peer review the amateur archaeologist can easily stray into the territory of sensationalism.

In 2012 Angela Micol, who described herself as a satellite archaeology researcher, announced she had discovered two previously unknown pyramids in Egypt by examining satellite imagery on Google Earth. University of Alabama archaeologist Sarah Parcak, Egyptologist Bob Brier and University of Hawaii archaeologist Robert Littman cautiously described Micol's claim as premature and unlikely (Coldeway 2012), while James Harrell, professor emeritus of archaeological geology at the

University of Toledo, outright called her “one of the so-called 'pyridiots' who see pyramids everywhere” stating that her finds were in fact natural butte landscape features (Jackson 2012). Writer Ian Paul looked at the surrounding context of Micol’s claimed pyramid locations when researching his article on the subject. He noted that one was in an area heavily disturbed by farming (thus reducing the potential for previously unidentified intact subsurface deposits) and the other had already been subject to archaeological investigation, being “just a few miles from the ancient ruins of Dimeh in Middle Egypt, not far from the city of Faiyum” (Paul 2012).

None of this stopped the story from being reported multiple times worldwide between 2012 and 2015 as “a giant discovery that overshadows the Pyramids of Giza” by History, PC World, CNN, Wired, Mashable, engadget, NBC News, the Daily Mail and others (Ancient Code 2015; Micol 2014). Regardless of the validity of Micol’s claims, the media reaction to her announcement clearly demonstrated that popular culture does not require evidence or proof to generate material, only an engaging narrative. It further showed that once a narrative has been created it is difficult to alter its trajectory, regardless of evidence or academic authority. There are similar demonstrations of this in the official government register of Aboriginal archaeological sites in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

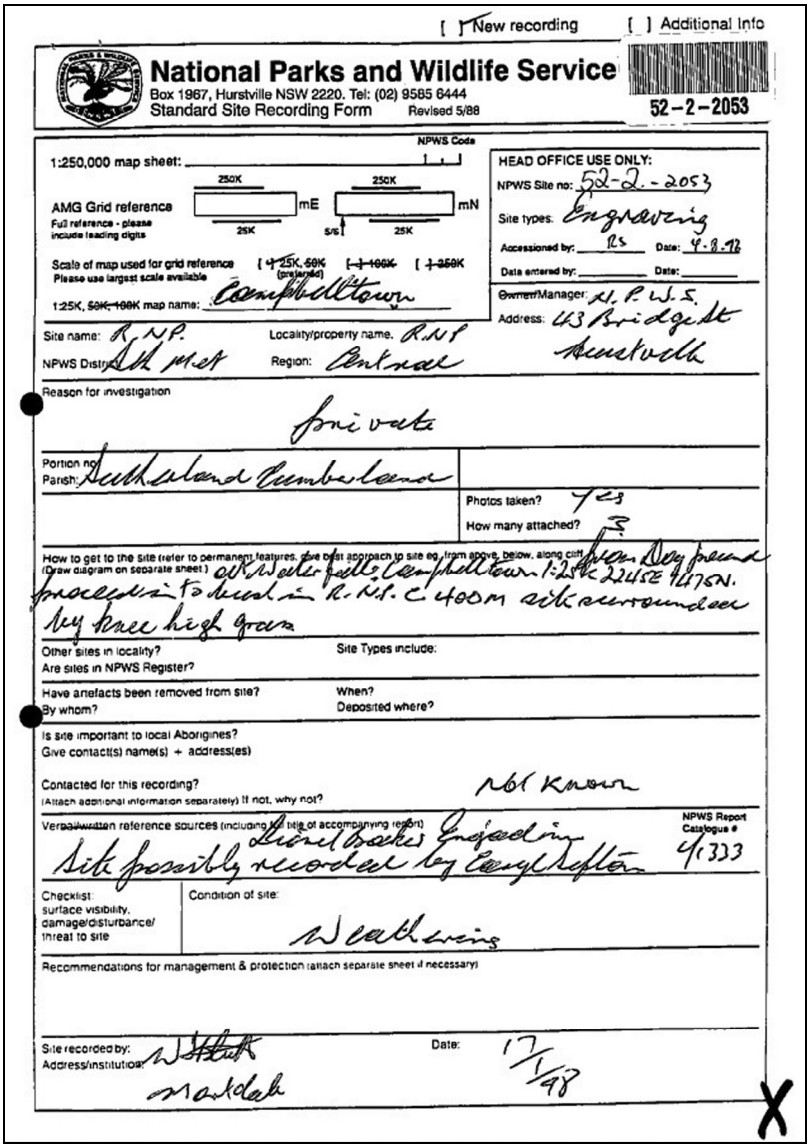
The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) maintains and administers the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) for NSW. According to its own statement, it has “operated since the 1970s, and as at June 2011 contained detailed information on 67,000 recorded sites” (OEH 2013). The register is “used by government, industry and heritage professionals who need the information for land-use planning, regulation and conservation management. It is also used by Aboriginal communities to help them manage, conserve and protect local sites and heritage” (OEH 2013). Despite its regular ongoing use by Aboriginal communities, heritage professionals, government bodies and private industry, there are very few requirements for standardised approaches or professional verification, such as peer review, before sites are officially registered by AHIMS staff and become part of the legislated record.

In 2015 an AHIMS Aboriginal site recording mobile app for iphone and android was added to the ways in which a site card could be submitted. A pdf form is also provided on the OEH website along with a guide on how to fill it in. In both cases, so long as the fields are filled, there is no

rigorous editorial check from OEH staff on the content supplied. There is no check either on the validity of the recorder, specifically on whether they are sufficiently qualified to undertake Aboriginal site identification and recording. The OEH website contains the statement: "currently Aboriginal sites are recorded by heritage professionals in collaboration with local Aboriginal communities and/or staff from OEH. The AHIMS Registrar can provide further details on who can record sites and how to record them" (OEH 2015). Despite this, however, the register contains multiple entries made by people who were neither qualified heritage professionals nor members of any Aboriginal community, but instead fall into the definition of amateur archaeologists.

This is in part due to the historical development of the register. Until the 1960s it was a list of sites managed by the Australian Museum. The recordings that were made during this period came from interested amateur organisations such as the Anthropology Society of NSW, the Sydney Prehistory Group and the Illawarra Prehistory Group (Attenbrow 2010, 7). Individuals with a passion for archaeology and Aboriginal prehistory were also a part of these formative recordings. A surveyor named Ian Sim was one; a draftsman named John Lough was another. Both recorded rock engravings throughout the 1960s. As of 2016 there were 264 AHIMS sites registered by Ian Sim and 81 originating from John Lough; these predominantly covered the region to the north of the Hawkesbury River. Lough recorded sites from the 1960s to the 1980s, while Sim's site cards in the register dated from the 1960s to the 1990s (OEH 2017).

As of 2016 train driver Warren Bluff had 2,674 sites in the AHIMS register under his name, most dating to the 1980s and 1990s (OEH 2017). Bluff's enthusiasm as an amateur led him to work with a number of archaeologists, who on occasion sought him out in later years to assist in relocating some of the sites he had previously recorded, especially since his site card recordings were not always legible (Figure 1-1). Although lacking any formal qualifications, Bluff acquired some skills through on the job training, passed on by the archaeologists he worked with (Archaeological Surveys and Reports Pty Ltd 2009).



[ ] New recording [ ] Additional Info

National Parks and Wildlife Service
Box 1967, Hurstville NSW 2220. Tel: (02) 9585 6444
Standard Site Recording Form Revised 5/88

52-2-2053

NPWS Code

1:250,000 map sheet:

AMG Grid reference (Full reference - please include leading digits): 250K mE 25K; 250K mN 25K S/S

Scale of map used for grid reference (Please use largest scale available): [ ] 25K, 50K (preferred) [ ] 100K [ ] 250K

1:25K, 50K, 100K map name: Campbelltown

HEAD OFFICE USE ONLY:
NPWS Site no: 52-2-2053
Site types: Engraving
Accessioned by: RS Date: 4.8.98
Data entered by: Date:
Owner/Manager: N.P.W.S.
Address: 43 Bridge St Hurstville

Site name: R.N.P. Locality/property name: R.N.P.
NPWS District: Metro Region: Central

Reason for investigation: Private

Portion no: Parish: Southerland Cumberland

Photos taken? Yes
How many attached? 3

How to get to the site (refer to permanent features, the best approach to site eg. from above, below, along cliff) (Draw diagram on separate sheet.): Off Waterfall, Campbelltown 1:25K 224SE 947SN. Proceed in to bush in R.N.P. C 400m site surrounded by knee high grass

Other sites in locality? Site Types include:
Are sites in NPWS Register?

Have artefacts been removed from site? When?
By whom? Deposited where?

Is site important to local Aborigines?
Give contact(s) name(s) + address(es)

Contacted for this recording? Not Known
(Attach additional information separately) If not, why not?

Verbal/written reference sources (including full title of accompanying report): Lionel Brake Engraving Site possibly recorded by Caryl Sefton NPWS Report Catalogue # 4/333

Checklist: surface visibility, damage/disturbance/ threat to site
Condition of site: Weathering

Recommendations for management & protection (attach separate sheet if necessary)

Site recorded by: W Bluff
Address/institution: Mosdale
Date: 17/1/98

Figure 1-1: Site card entry by Warren Bluff circa 1998, AHIMS #52-2-2053, courtesy of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Rosemary Taplin was another of these early site recorders, even featuring in an article in the Sydney Morning Herald in February 1965. The article referred to her as an amateur anthropologist, with Taplin claiming to have identified some 500 sites. The article stated she had "spent most of her spare time for five years searching for Aboriginal relics" and further noted that "a museum employee said… that at one stage recently she worked full-time for two weeks indexing and classifying the mass of material Miss Taplin had sent in" (SMH 1965). The curator of anthropology at the Australian Museum was even quoted, stating: "Miss Taplin has done valuable work in finding some hundreds of sites of Aboriginal carvings and paintings. She is very, very good at it… she has found sites that were completely unknown to other people" (SMH 1965). Despite these endorsements, the Herald reporter chose caution in describing her then latest find, stating that "Rosemary Taplin believes she has discovered a priceless Aboriginal art gallery" further pointing out her amateur status by noting "Miss Taplin, 22, works as a mail sorter at the GPO" (SMH 1965).

The article also featured a photo of Rosemary Taplin modifying an Aboriginal engraving, or as the caption to the photo described it: "Miss Rosemary Taplin colours-in the details of an Aboriginal rock carving she discovered at Nielsen Park, Vaucluse" (SMH 1965) (Figure 1-2). This action would be viewed by archaeologists today as vandalism, actively damaging the site. Further, it is culturally inappropriate that a non-Aboriginal person should make cultural modifications to an art site. Such interactions are only culturally appropriate where there has been a transmission of information through the generations, with any additions to an existing site required to be undertaken in a culturally appropriate way. Similarly, her removal of artefacts from sites would have potentially reduced their research potential by shifting them out of their original context, unless properly recorded before doing so. The volume of sites still within the AHIMS register attests to Taplin's enthusiasm, as she recorded and registered 197 AHIMS sites before reportedly moving to Queensland in the 1970s (OEH 2017).

In 1992 the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists newsletter featured a short article titled *The Taplin Files* which briefly identified some of the problems associated with site card recordings attributed to Taplin. The article stated: "after tortuous investigations on Rosemary Taplin's methodology for Aboriginal site recording in the 1960s I still feel bewildered and unready to offer a key for reliable results in the hunt for a Taplin site. Except for those sites which have been independently discovered and recorded by others, I have so far failed to

locate even one Taplin site in the field!" (Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists 1992).

Figure 1-2: Rosemary Taplin recolouring rock art circa 1965 (SMH 1965)

Since the 1970s the administration of the AHIMS register has been taken over by the government, with various name changes along the way. The controlling department moved from National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), which then changed its name to the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), then the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), before shifting to the current title of OEH (Jordan 2012). Following the shift to government control, archaeologists, both consultants and academic researchers, have accounted for the majority of site recordings added to the register. The most recent site

identifications and their site card recordings are predominantly undertaken as a part of environmental assessments, triggered by proposed development activity. Despite the use of AHIMS as an official government register, to be checked as a part of due diligence for developers, it retains its links to the past through unedited and often unverified site recordings from amateur archaeology enthusiasts like Bluff and Taplin. As noted previously, these enthusiasts have often been appreciated for their efforts in identifying Aboriginal sites. The current AHIMS policy document produced by OEH for internal management states that AHIMS staff will record Aboriginal sites as correctly identified and provided to OEH and in the prescribed manner, putting the burden of correct identification on the recorder rather than the AHIMS staff member. Going further than that, the policy document also states: "AHIMS is not intended to be conclusive about whether any information or records contained within it is up-to-date, comprehensive or otherwise accurate" (OEH 2011). This is certainly the case with many of the Michael Guider amateur recordings currently present in the register.

Between 1991 and 1997 a gardener and untrained amateur archaeologist named Michael Guider officially registered a total of 545 sites and submitted four reports to the government administered AHIMS register. He also wrote 15 short reports on the Aboriginal history of local government areas and supplied copies of them to each of the councils they pertained to (OEH 2017). He was not shy in touting his own opinions despite a lack of training, going so far as to critique Dr Val Attenbrow, research scientist at the Australian Museum and author of the seminal book *Sydney's Aboriginal Past* (2010). In 1989 Attenbrow visited a site called Grantham Creek 1 (AHIMS #45-5-0348). She stated: "this site, recorded by Jim Kohen in February 1984, is a scatter of stone artefacts… It appears as if [it]… has recently been developed as part of a housing sub-division. I saw no sign of any artefacts… The site has probably been destroyed or totally disturbed" (OEH 2017).

Guider responded to this in a site card update he produced in October 1991, stating: "Dr Attenbrow wrote to NPWS on the third of February 1990 saying the site has probably been destroyed, as she saw no sign of any artefacts. I can assure you that this site still exists and the greater proportion of it is still preserved within Duncan Park, Seven Hills" (OEH 2017).

Based on reference to the names of the sites that Guider recorded, at least 81 of them were located by him within the bounds of public parks and

playing fields in developed urban areas. High levels of past disturbance and development at many of these locations had lowered the potential for Aboriginal sites there. Past impacts included earthworks and the use of imported fill to level off roads and playing fields, making the potential for intact sites very dubious. The motivation for Guider's recordings at public park locations have also been questioned since their registration considering what was later discovered about him. Michael Guider was convicted of child molestation and imprisoned on sixty charges of child sexual abuse in 1996. He was also convicted in 2002 for the manslaughter of nine year old Sydney girl Samantha Knight, who had gone missing in August 1986. Guider later stated that he buried her in Cooper Park, in the Sydney suburb of Bellevue Hill. The body of Samantha Knight was never recovered, despite police investigations including excavation and the use of a sniffer dog. Guider claimed he later moved the body from Cooper Park to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Kirribilli. The reaction of the sniffer dog to soil at that location indicated that a body had been there in the past but was no longer present by the time the police investigated (Cornford 2003). Based on the revelation of Guider's darker motivations, one possible interpretation could therefore be that the recording of Aboriginal sites by him in public park areas may have been undertaken as some form of alibi for his criminal activities. His many site cards however are still retained as valid listings within the AHIMS register.

One of the Guider park sites, for example, is Haslams Ck 1 (AHIMS #45-6-2339) located in Phillips Park at Lidcombe. It was registered as an artefact scatter with some shell fragments. This site was recorded in 1992 and as of 2017 is still listed on the AHIMS register as valid (OEH 2017). A 2015 inspection of the site however identified it to be within a grossly disturbed area. Some shell fragments were present but they were in a highly disturbed urban context and were unlikely to have any cultural association. No archaeological value could be ascribed to these shell fragments and no archaeological significance or potential was ascribed to the location itself. No artefacts were identified during this inspection, although it was stated on the site card that 10 had previously been identified at the time of the site recording (AECOM Australia 2015).

The site Naremburn Park (AHIMS #45-6-2938) is another example, located at St Leonards. Guider registered an artefact scatter along the fence marking the boundary of the park, close to the road verge along Dalleys Road which is immediately adjacent to the public park area. Both the road and the park had been subject to landscape modification including extensive earthworks to level and landscape the area. A railway cutting is

also close to this location, which significantly modified the landscape as well. At a 2014 inspection of the site no artefacts or archaeological potential were identified at the location. Instead it evidenced imported fill, road base and recently deposited broken glass and rubbish (AECOM Australia 2014a).

Guider's site card showed a detailed drawing of where he claimed to have identified artefacts and referenced a book on the history of Naremburn held by the Willoughby City Library, which contained a description of Aboriginal camp sites having been located in this area as late as the 1800s (Wilksch 1988). The site card described small pieces of shell here, including Sydney rock oyster and cockle. The number of artefacts, description of artefact types and measurements of them were not recorded on the site card, although it was stated that raw material types included red silcrete, quartz and indurated mudstone (OEH 2017).

The question therefore is whether or not any of these artefacts were legitimate. His site card recordings are neat and thorough with detailed mud maps showing the location of material he identified, but this could have been natural material imported as fill for works in the area, misinterpreted by Guider, him being an amateur with no formal archaeological training. It is worth noting though that not all of the Guider sites have been bereft of Aboriginal cultural material when subjected to updated inspections. Mary Dallas and Paul Irish inspected Guider's Acacia Park site in 2001 and later stated that the: "area is highly disturbed and has blue metal, gravel and other rubbish across it. Thin remnant soil layer capping park. Several silcrete flaked pieces found" (AHIMS #45-6-2407) (OEH 2017).

Another possible reason to account for no material being located during later inspections at some of these sites is that any legitimate artefacts that were present may have been removed. Guider's site cards often record that it was his common practice to collect the majority of the cultural material that he identified. Some of it may have been given to the Australian Museum, but he did not record much detail about it on the site cards themselves. Indeed, without any photographic recordings included with the site cards and no physical evidence extant at many of the sites, it is not possible to reach a conclusive position on the Guider sites. There is however certainly enough uncertainty to suggest a review, including further investigation, to ascertain whether they should remain classified as valid sites within the AHIMS register.

Michael Guider is a more extreme example of an amateur archaeologist due to his criminality. His contribution to the AHIMS register comprised 545 sites. The other previously noted amateur AHIMS recordings were also sizeable in number, with Warren Bluff contributing 2,674 sites, 197 attributed to Rosemary Taplin, 264 by Ian Sim and 81 by John Lough. It can be argued that the contribution of amateur recordings has been of use, identifying multiple site locations during the early formative period of the NSW site register, with at least 3,761 amateur recordings currently in the AHIMS register. The negatives of these amateur recordings however include site damage, through the collection of material by Taplin and Guider and the modification of the engraving shown in the Taplin newspaper article.

Furthermore, these amateur site card records are sometimes illegible or fragmentary and as noted some sites have not been able to be verified or relocated in more recent inspections. In part these issues relate to the amateurs themselves, but they also relate to the lack of editorial oversight on the part of OEH. The AHIMS register contains gaps, omissions and coordinate errors for a significant portion of its sites, which are marked by centroids only. Those site cards provided by amateur archaeologists often have further issues as well. Review and further investigation would be required to accurately determine the legitimacy of the amateur sites currently listed as valid in the register. It can only be hoped that a tighter editorial control and extensive review of the register may be undertaken by OEH at some future stage to provide more certainty.

The Structure of the Book

The papers presented in this book cover a wide variety of subjects relating to the relationship between fringe and core in contemporary Australian archaeology. They are indicative of contemporary practices within Australia, representative of dichotomies experienced in worldwide archaeology and forward looking in the way that they examine the existing status quo in relation to possible developments for the future. It is hoped that conversations about this subject may lead to new initiatives for both core and fringe, academic and amateur, each informing the other through a developing understanding of their relationship of opposition.

One paper that bridges past, present and future in relation to applications of pseudo-science is Denis Gojak's chapter. Therein he examines the 1930s archaeological work of Australian journalist and writer Frederic Slater, who developed a personal theory that Aboriginal rock art motifs

were in fact the alphabetical letters of a complex pictorial language that was exported, along with religion, to the ancient Egyptians. Although discounted by the mainstream during Slater's lifetime and forgotten after his death, these ideas were resurrected by the father and son team of Steven and Evan Strong in the 2010s to bolster their own argument that Australian Aboriginal symbols were the precursor of Egyptian hieroglyphs. The main challenge for archaeology identified by Gojak in this relationship of past and present fringe literature, was the development of a connection between the Strongs and contemporary Aboriginal Elders. The attraction of an empowering fringe narrative and a distrust of orthodox archaeology have led to a strong relationship developing, with significant repercussions and future challenges for archaeologists as a result.

Rocco Bosco's chapter on Ghost Archaeology discusses the layered relationship between core and fringe where they collide within the same geographical spaces and locations. Many areas subject to archaeological investigation or retaining defined heritage significance have been refashioned as places of public entertainment through the introduction of ghost tours as part of an ongoing tourist trade. While some of these tours incorporate historical information into their presentations, many have avoided presenting knowledge of the past in favour of highlighting tales of the supernatural. This redefines historical locations as places that connect to paranormal landscapes, while the weight of history at these locations is still referenced to legitimate the ghost tours themselves. Bosco also comments on the cultural colonisation of Australia, noting that European originated ghost stories have supplanted Aboriginal Dreamtime stories within numerous heritage spaces.

Jillian Huntley's chapter on Australian rock art looks at some of the more obscure examples of motifs and engravings. The paper considers conspiracy theories about aliens and hieroglyphs, both claimed to be represented via specific examples of rock art. Huntley stresses why recognising Aboriginal authenticity is important, discussing the psychological and emotional effects on Aboriginal communities when their heritage is aligned with the alternatives that have been identified in works of pseudo-science.

Chapters five and six in this volume are both written by Darran Jordan, covering very different types of subject matter. In his first paper he examines the process of an aleatory writing technique used popularly in creative writing for prose and lyrics. In this instance however Jordan

applies it to archaeological writing to determine whether the process can provide benefits in an art/archaeology context.

His second paper examines representations of archaeology in science-fiction. The immense nature of science-fiction history being too unwieldy to be usefully presented in the limited space allowed for this paper, he has reduced the scope to an in-depth look at a case study – the British television program and multimedia entertainment concept that is Doctor Who. Since the ongoing narrative of Doctor Who has been in constant production since 1963, it provides an insight into the ways in which archaeological representations have changed in popular media over the last 50 plus years.

Although far from a fringe subject, the field of space archaeology attracts a romantic vision of what archaeology could be in the future. Jordan's article on representations of archaeology in Doctor Who gave reference to science-fiction conceits about space archaeologists. Alice Gorman's paper examines the Rocket Park in Australian culture in chapter seven and identifies how this relates to space archaeology, being a direct terrestrial outcome of the Space Age.

Kerrie Dougherty continues the space archaeology theme with an examination of amateur archaeological salvage works undertaken for the Rocket Retrieval Group at Woomera. She makes the point that the almost totally unknown story of these retrievals is an example of amateur archaeology with a positive outcome, as these works were carried out entirely by volunteers. As the first significant space archaeology project undertaken in Australia, it acts as a counterbalance of a positive amateur/volunteer story, as opposed to some of the more unfortunate stories of amateur archaeology detailed in this chapter.

In chapter nine Robert Maxwell looks at the logical ramifications of current theories on non-linear time. Forward looking but cautionary in its approach, Maxwell's work foresees an impending collision of conflicting theoretical frameworks and a necessary reappraisal of how we define archaeology in order to continue to function cohesively on into the future.

Finally, chapter ten collates the variant examinations of archaeology presented in this volume and reconsiders the relationship between fringe and core. It is a relationship that has both beneficial and detrimental associations; the shifting nature of this connection holds great potential for archaeological and heritage applications on into the future.

Conclusion

This volume is not intended to act as an attack on works of pseudo-science or to point out the errors of amateur archaeologists. It would be setting up a straw man to critique amateur works based on inaccuracy, or to critique pseudo-science due to identifiable gaps in logic. Rather this book seeks to encourage a reappraisal of the relationship between core and fringe in contemporary archaeology, with the intention of finding new ways to connect the two. As shown in this chapter, the works of amateur archaeologists have been valuable to academic intentions, when combined with editorial control, expert direction and peer review. There are also lessons that academia can learn from popular culture representations of archaeology. An ongoing romanticism of fringe ideas in popular media has demonstrated that many works of pseudo-science chime with the wider general public.

In order to control and accurately communicate its own narratives, archaeology needs to find ways to use the tools of communication demonstrated by fringe archaeology in order to reach wider audiences in different ways. Archaeologist Cornelius Holtorf succinctly summarised this by stating:

> "the issue is not how archaeologists can make those people who love Heinrich Schliemann, Indiana Jones, Lara Croft and Time Team more interested in their own version of archaeology. The issue is rather what these popular figures can tell the professionals about popular themes and interests they need to address themselves. As a major report of the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK recently stated, the problem is not one of a lack of 'public understanding of science' but increasingly it is one of a lack of scientific understanding of the public" (Holtorf 2007a, 12).

It is not sufficient to simply denigrate the pyramidiots of the world when they are proving to have great success in selling their stories to a global audience. An appraisal of the key strengths of fringe works may reveal important lessons to be learned from them in relation to the strong attraction they have to the general public. Similarly, by examining interactions with amateurs and pseudo-scientists, it may be possible to identify new ways in which they can be involved in archaeology projects, both for their benefit and for that of academic archaeology.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESURRECTION OF FREDERIC SLATER: TALES OF A PSEUDO-ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE 1930S AND 2010S

DENIS GOJAK

Introduction

The relationship between archaeology and pseudo-archaeology is axiomatically one of opposition and distrust by both sides, as it is between individuals from each of those camps. Although there are many valid reasons for archaeology to better understand pseudo-archaeology, particularly why it exists, how it obtains traction with the public, and what it tells us about our own discipline, our prevalent response is to ignore it and hope that it will go away (Gojak 2016). The desire of many people who would be described as pseudo-archaeologists is more complex. Often they seek the approval and endorsement of the discipline, while being contemptuous of its forms, exclusivity and seeming elitism. Such ambivalence and antagonisms can be traced back to the early professional development of archaeology, and have persisted with remarkable constancy for more than a century and a half (Derricourt 2012; Feder 2011).

The definitional boundary line separating archaeology and its pseudo-scientific counterpart, which allows these two camps to both defend their own territory and seek to encroach on the other, is not fixed but contingent. In this sense it is no different to the 'demarcation problem' that exists within science generally (Laudan 1983; Pigliucci 2013). The assumption that archaeology, or any other discipline, fills a well-bounded and clearly defined space has been challenged by a range of studies showing how disciplinary boundaries within archaeology have emerged and are maintained, such as Holtorf (2007b) and Lovata (2007). Most archaeologists most of the time intuitively know where the boundary is,

through immersion in the disciplinary culture, while those on the other side lack cohesion as a group, being largely motivated by their individual concerns. As such they face encroachment as much from other alternative archaeologies as they do from within the discipline.

While the clash across the boundary is well-studied, the interpersonal relationships of pseudo-archaeologists has received less examination. Across all pseudo-scientific realms there is a strong association between claimants and unique evidence, while sharing or co-opting of others' claims is infrequent and often fraught. This is due to a claimant's relationship to their finds. It is one of immediate revelation – generally they are the originators of their ideas, and are not beholden to earlier researchers. While they may cite evidence from others in support of their claim, there is a tendency towards intellectual territoriality that results in many partnerships falling apart quickly. Efforts to convince others have to be directed toward the science, rather than seeking converts from other rejected ideas. Among those believing in a non-orthodox human past in Australia, Rex Gilroy stands out as someone who has tried to incorporate as many other finds claimed by others as possible, but such rare ecumenical interpretations become cumbersome and internally contradictory (Gilroy 2000, 2003).

Consequently the twilight world of any pseudo-science tends to be a lonely place. It is a rare event even when the same evidence is embraced by two different advocates and interpreted consistently (see Garwood for Flat-Earthers, Gordin 2012 on Velikovskian history and Wertheim 2011 for alternative physics). Making use of an earlier advocate's name and experiences to obtain legitimacy is an even rarer strategy.

One such alternative archaeologist who has been resurrected in later decades was the Australian journalist and writer Frederic Slater (Figure 2-1). He was soundly ignored during the 1930s by a still nascent Australian archaeological establishment, and his ideas did seemingly go away, until 2011 when he was rediscovered by two modern day pseudo-archaeologists, the father and son team of Steven and Evan Strong.

This paper explores Slater's key ideas, and how and why his resurrection is being undertaken by the Strongs. The Strongs produce a very different kind of pseudo-archaeology to those, like Slater, who came before. This paper is part of a broader analysis of how such claims originate and why alternative archaeologies gain and maintain an attraction among the public. The Strongs' use of Slater's name is both strategic and expedient, and

supports an emerging trend in pseudo-archaeological claimants engaging directly with Indigenous people, and building upon that community's distrust of the archaeological establishment and an orthodoxy that they sometimes find alienating.

Frederic Slater

Frederic Worral Slater was born in Britain in c.1868 and came to Australia while young, his family settling in Rockhampton, Queensland. Although his first love appears to have been music, he became a journalist, beginning at country papers and working his way up into major metropolitan dailies in the early 1920s. By mid-decade he was freelancing and writing for many different publications, and as many would have been uncredited it is impossible to provide a full assessment of his work in this period (Gojak 2017).

As a journalist Slater worked in the early 20th century in the NSW goldmining towns of Mudgee and Gulgong. It was probably here that he made friendships with Aboriginal people, possibly members of the Kamilaroi nation. Writing as a freelancer he showed a lot of interest in Aboriginal culture, writing a number of articles reflecting good research and positive attitudes towards Aboriginal people. In *Meistersingers of the Australian bush*, for example, he wrote about the role of singing and music in Aboriginal life, showing a good command of ethnographic and secondary literature (Slater 1926).

It may have been while investigating Aboriginal music that he came across the work of Isaac Nathan who in 1848 had set Aboriginal songs to western music, collaborating with Eliza Dunlop, a resident of Wollombi (Nathan 1848). Her grandson, Roy Goddard, was a member of a mainly Newcastle-based group of amateur archaeologists that also included W. J. Enright and Carlyle Greenwell, who later bequeathed an endowment in support of archaeology and anthropology to Sydney University. Among the sites this loose group visited and recorded in the inter-war period was Burragurra or Devils Rock at Wollombi and another at Yango, both in the rugged sandstone country to the north of Sydney. These were major sites in size and setting, believed to be associated with men's initiation. Consistent with ethnographic observations of Aboriginal ceremony around the turn of the century, the group believed that the symbols formed a narrative that was progressively revealed to initiates, in the form of an unfolding story or stories (Howitt 1904 provides a useful overview of contemporary understanding of the cosmology associated with initiation).

Figure 2-1: Frederic Slater, used with permission from copyright holder Dr Ralph Sutherland

Eliza Dunlop, Goddard's grandmother, had befriended Kamilaroi people near where they lived at Wollombi in the late 1830s-40s. She recorded Kamilaroi words and songs in a notebook that is now in the Mitchell Library, but in the 1930s was probably in Goddard's possession (Dunlop 1840). Initially it was probably the musical and song content of Dunlop's notebook that most interested Slater.

Whether through contact with Aboriginal people, his own reading of anthropological literature or ideas among the Hunter group, Slater began to develop a very specific interpretation of traditional Aboriginal ceremonial cultural practice. Unlike the other recorders of Aboriginal rock art around Sydney, for example, he saw the engravings not as a palimpsest of different motifs that may or may not have been functionally interconnected, but a primary narrative which was directly instructing or imparting some deep philosophical or moral statements onto initiates. Following an unclear logic, Slater formed the idea that the Kamilaroi language in the Dunlop notebook was a sacred rather than secular language. He came to believe that it was closely connected to the implied narrative in the large engraving sites.

Slater read anthropology, as is apparent from his writings; only a few authors are mentioned by name but these are instructive. The most significant was Andrew Lang (1844-1912), journalist and folklorist. Lang used his foundation in folklore studies as a springboard to examine issues in anthropology and the origins of religion. In contrast to the strongly evolutionary framework that was popularised by Herbert Spencer in the late 19th century, which applied Darwinian evolutionary principles to cultural evolution, Lang argued that humans had always been of high intelligence rather than this being a correlate of social complexity. His primary work on mythology, *Myth, religion and ritual*, argued that mythical and sacred knowledge survived as society evolved and adapted, gradually transforming from practical to esoteric knowledge, but recoverable as folk tales and cultural practices (Lang 1887).

Lang's view was consistent with Slater's own idea that Aboriginal people were not inferior, either intellectually or in their evolutionary position to other cultures. He also reflects Lang's belief that myth and ritual were integral to a society's cultural transmission of ideas, and that symbols embedded deeper meanings, some of which were overt, while others may have been forgotten but remained present in relict form.