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Places people value: Social significance and cultural exchange in post-invasion Australia

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the relationship between social significance, or the value of places to the community, and those places which evidence the shared *heritage* of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The subject of the paper is therefore not 'archaeology' but heritage. Heritage is the framework within which most Australians perceive archaeology and the context within which archaeological sites are conserved, managed and interpreted (Sullivan 1996; Byrne 1993, 1998; ATSIC and Office of National Tourism 1997). The aims of the paper are twofold, firstly I intend to speculate on the evidence for cross-cultural exchange between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and, in particular, the cultural transfer from Aboriginal culture to settler culture. Secondly I aim to pique the reader's interest in 'community values' or social significance in the hope that more archaeologists might explore the relationship between communities and archaeological sites.

The theme of the discussions and interrogation of the case examples is an exploration of social significance of places and landscapes as evidence of cross-cultural exchange. We have been told that 'contact' is a process of exchange and negotiation (see for instance Torrence and Clarke 2000) and that in archaeological study Indigenous cultures are no longer seen as passive recipients of a superior settler culture and technology. However, most studies continue to focus on evidence of change, adaptation and appropriation in the Indigenous culture. There is still therefore, the impression that settler culture is superior in the sense of being stronger and more robust or impervious to the gentler less convincing cultures and technologies of the Indigenous group (for example Coutts, Witter and Parsons 1977). If the process of cultural contact is an 'exchange' or 'negotiation', and if we accept that Aboriginal people were (are) active participants in this exchange, then we would expect to find that Aboriginal people value the places where this exchange took place (regardless of whether it was peaceful or violent). We should also expect to find evidence of this exchange and negotiation in adaptations in settler culture.

Two datasets or case studies are used. In the first case study, I explore the notion of shared heritage or places of value to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I illustrate the discussion with examples of places from the historic past that are of value to the Aboriginal community in northern Cape York (see McIntyre-Tamwoy 2001). These places are often called 'historic' sites and are usually assumed to be of primary value to descendants of European settlers.

In the second part of the paper I speculate on the possible evidence for cultural transfer from Indigenous Australians to non-Indigenous Australians, made manifest in contemporary Australian notions of spirituality in landscape. To illustrate this discussion I draw on examples of places that non-Indigenous Australians identify as significant because of perceived or known Aboriginal values. The non-Indigenous community identified these places as having community value during the NSW Comprehensive Regional Assessment of Forests (Context 1998).



CONTACT SITES, SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN NORTHERN CAPE YORK

In northern Cape York we find that apparently 'European' places and objects can be significant to Aboriginal people (McIntyre-Tamwoy 1998). The meaning of these places is to some extent transformed and accommodated within Aboriginal cosmology. Northern Cape York and parts of the Torres Strait have long been a meeting point for different cultures, with trade routes extending from the mainland and out through the Torres Strait and into Papua New Guinea. Early shipping from the European powers passed through the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Japanese were involved in pearling and bêche-de-mer industries and contact between the inhabitants of the various Torres Strait Islands and mainland Aboriginal people was well established prior to European settlement (Moore 1965: 127). The term 'pre-contact' has little meaning in this region, which is characterised by a long history of trade and exchange.

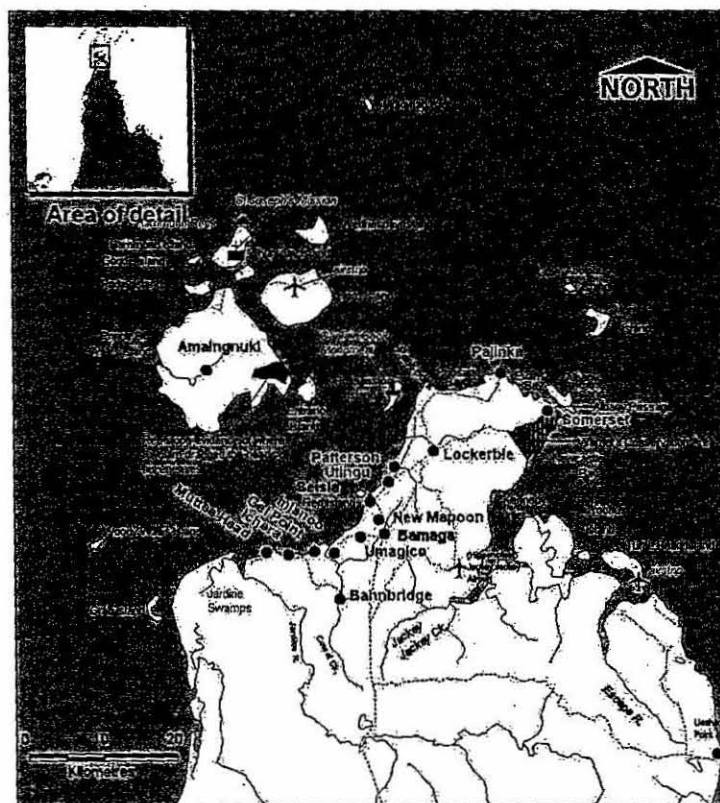


Figure 1: Map of the Northern Cape York Peninsula

Not only is it difficult to define a pre-contact time, but it is clear that to some extent the contact period in Cape York has not ended. The contact process involves the transfer,

adaptation and transformation of practices, ideas and technologies. The current location, layout and construction of today's villages are in fact a product of this process. While the villages exist in the main because of government regulation, the layout of the villages often reflects cultural affiliations with houses clustering in distinct cultural groups. Similarly, people maintain direct links with a simpler way of life through the maintenance of weekend or lunchtime camps.

Sometimes the nature of the attachment that people feel for a place is difficult to understand or predict. The process of cultural exchange often results in the layering of feelings and meanings associated with a place as, for instance, at Somerset where the sentient nature of the surrounding landscape intersects with the recent historical significance. Somerset is located on the north-east coast of Cape York Peninsula approximately 9 km south-east of Cape York (see Figure 1). It was established in 1864 as a joint Queensland and Imperial outpost in part to secure the northern coast and also to provide assistance to victims of shipwreck. At that time the Torres Strait was a major shipping route to and from Europe. The settlement was plagued by under-resourcing and never fulfilled the expectation of its founders. The resident Police Magistrate, the Queensland government's most senior representative, wielded extensive power and influence over both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of the area. For the local Aboriginal people the establishment of Somerset and the arrival of John Jardine Snr and his son Frances Lascelles Jardine had a devastating affect. The violent actions of the two, who each served as police magistrates for a large part of the settlement's existence, are evidenced in a series of massacre sites.

While non-Indigenous Australians visit Somerset and often view the Jardines as pioneers who forged new frontiers and endured amazing hardships, the local community see them as malevolent beings that perpetrated a terrible injustice on their families. One might expect then that the local Aboriginal community would be seeking the obliteration of all evidence of this settlement and the Jardine family. However, to the contrary, the community carries out the only management that occurs at this site. The place is very important. They treat it with respect and not only as a symbol of invasion. This can be comprehended if one understands that at places like Somerset Aboriginal concepts of time may be evident as a multi-layering of spirits and entities from the *biportaim* (equivalent to the concept of Dreamtime), the more recent *pastaim* (the era following white invasion) and *diskaintaim* (the present). The Jardines and their actions become an important part of this complex tapestry of time. Parts of the surrounding scrub have always been regarded as dangerous country. Frank Jardine, who is buried at Somerset, has in effect been absorbed into the cosmology of the area, at once both deepening and proving the dangerous nature of the country.

In Cape York there may be places where the only physical remains attest to the modern use of places. Even so, one cannot assume that attachment to such places is recent, i.e., connected with that use as often places are selected for use because of deep attachment. For example, Christianity in northern Cape York and the Torres Strait (McIntyre-Tamwoy 1999; see also Rose and Swain 1988) is associated with important contemporary ceremonies such as the 'Coming of the Light'. The churches (for example, see Figure 2) and other Christian monuments such as the white crosses which dot headlands throughout the area, are not only located in places of contemporary significance; the locations were often chosen because they had prior significance and this was to demonstrate the dominance of Christianity over old religion. They faced out to sea and are often the first part of the villages that can be seen when approached via traditional sea routes.

Some places or objects have been assumed by conservation agencies and others to be of historic non-Indigenous value only, and in such cases tensions may arise over their



management and ownership. Examples of such places are Second World War sites in Cape York (see Figure 3). Under federal legislation the 'material culture of war' remains the property of the relevant defence force regardless of how long or where it has been abandoned. So, for example, the RAAF may mount an expedition to recover a plane wreck to salvage materials or remove it to another location. At the time that this provision was included in legislation it was intended to protect against pilfering, souveniring or espionage activities with heritage value to local communities unlikely to have been a consideration. However many Second World War sites have important cross-cultural significance to Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York and the war and the experiences and people encountered have been absorbed into the memory and heritage of these communities. There are even dances complete with headdresses and costumes that reflect the experiences of this period.

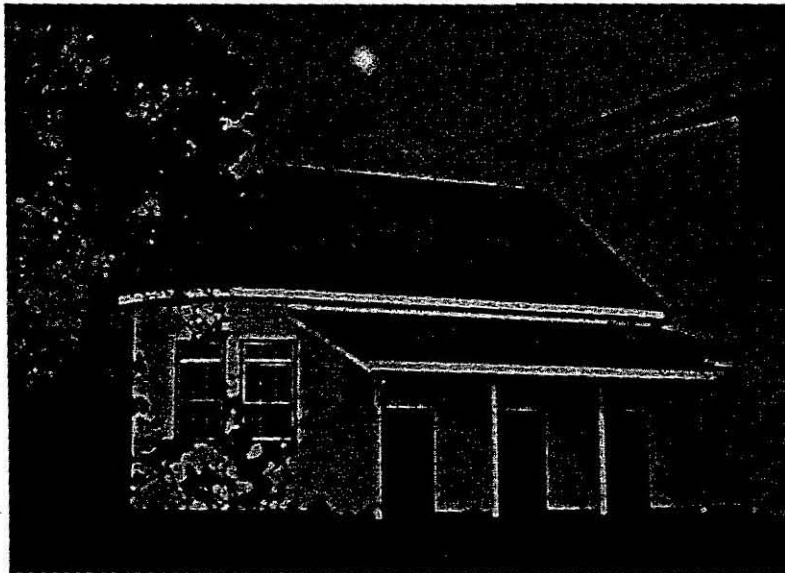


Figure 2: St. Michael's and All Angels' Church at Injinoo. Like many other churches it is built in a position of prominence, able to be viewed from the sea

Unlike resident non-Indigenous people in northern Cape York and the Torres Strait who were either incarcerated (as in the case of resident Japanese) or evacuated (as in the case of white residents and workers), most Aboriginal and Torres Strait people remained in their communities, operating very much as normal alongside the large contingent of Army and RAAF units stationed in the region. For some people the Second World War symbolises the start of the modern era in Cape York, with men being introduced to the concept of equal pay and camaraderie with Europeans that they had not previously experienced. Aboriginal people have strong views on how some Second World War sites on their land should be managed, and at times this clashes with bureaucratic and essentially western views. Adjacent to Jacky Jacky airport are two plane-crash sites dating from the time when the airport was Higgins Field, a major RAAF base. Heritage authorities, encouraged by local members of the non-Indigenous population interested in history and heritage, have fenced the most accessible of these sites and it has become a regular point of interest for tourists. In the case of the other crash site, the Indigenous community's preference prevailed and access to the site is restricted maintaining its seclusion in respect for the spirits of the dead. This non-interventionist approach has been misconstrued in the past as disinterest by groups based in Canberra who at one

point sought to remove the plane in order to use it for spares for another that was being restored.

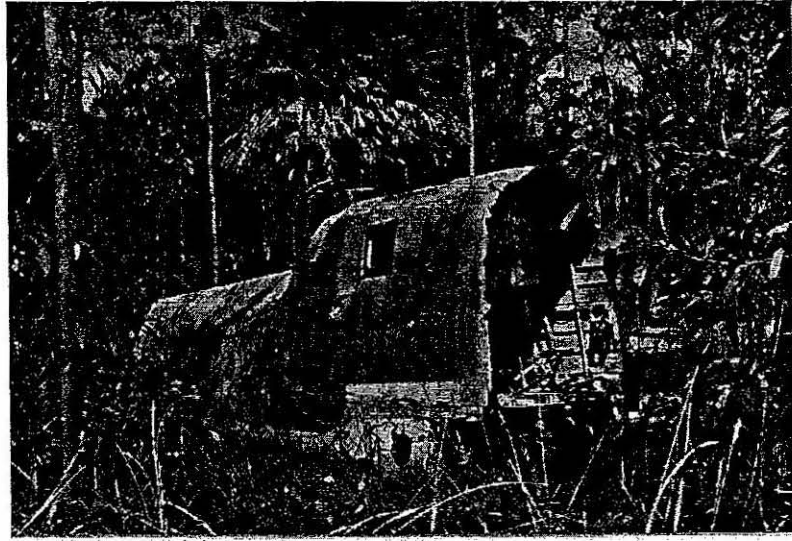


Figure 3: This Second World War Beaufort bomber crashed in bushland adjacent to Higgins Field (now Jacky Jacky Airport) killing all on board. The Aboriginal community manage the site by excluding visitors. The bush has been allowed to regenerate in the area as a sign of respect, and to maintain privacy for the spirits of the dead.

Another area with complex attachment for both Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous Australians is Cape York itself, or the 'Tip' as it is colloquially referred to. Each dry season tens of thousands of tourists travel to the Tip. They walk the last kilometre over steep and stony outcrops, oblivious to the disturbed ceremonial sites under foot. They have their photographs taken in front of the sign that says 'You are Standing on the Northern-most Point of Australia', camp for one or two days and then return along the same rough road to their homes down south. What is this Australian obsession with having our photographs taken along the perimeter of our country? Surely there can be no clearer act of affirming ownership. The Injinoo Aboriginal community think so too, and it is no coincidence then that they selected this site to symbolically reclaim Cape York Peninsula in the inaugural Cape York Land Summit (see Figure 4).

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE AS AN INDICATOR OF CONTINUING CULTURAL EXCHANGE

While there have been some reported examples of the transfer of material culture, technologies and language from Aboriginal to settler Australians, especially stockmen, explorers and surveyors and those marooned or lost 'amidst the tribes', most contact archaeological studies have concentrated on the evidence of contact or cultural exchange found in Indigenous suites of material culture (for example, Courtney and McNiven 1998; Deetz 1977). However, contact is a process of cultural exchange, adaptation and, at times, appropriation. It is best seen as a dialogue, although at different points in time one or other culture or 'voice' may be dominant. If this is true then we should be able to

find evidence of this dialogue and exchange in both cultures and indeed the process should be continuing today.

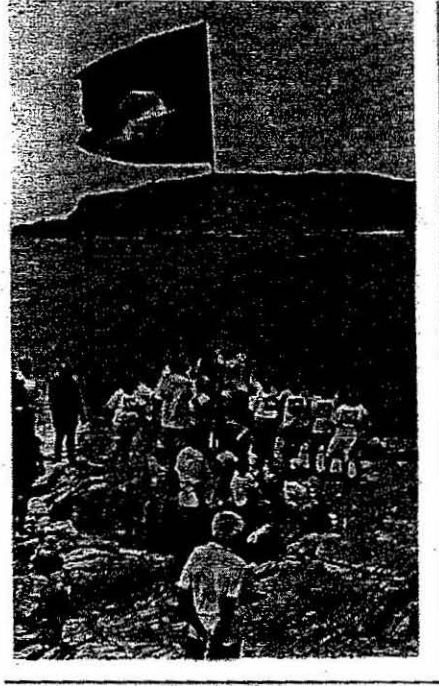


Figure 4: The Tip of Cape York is a tourist destination for many Australians who cover the last steep kilometre on foot to be photographed at the northernmost point in Australia. To local Aboriginal people it is a more symbolic landscape and was chosen as the place to 'reclaim' their lands, and Pajinka in particular, during the inaugural Cape York Land Summit.

Rose notes that 'we human beings construct the passages of our lives through our cultures and actions. Different cultures, different actions: different traces. Contrasts between the concreteness of place and the elusive duality of the signatures of our lives is nowhere more vivid than on the frontiers where intercultural encounters produce dense and provocative material and imaginative traces' (Rose 2000: 215). If we accept that the *frontiers* shifted over time and today exist as varying levels of intercultural dialogue, then it follows that settler culture is likely to have been altered due to the interaction with the Indigenous culture and that such change may still be continuing as a result of ongoing intercultural negotiations or interactions. In fact this is evidenced to some extent in Rose's opening line in *Nourishing Terrains*: 'Aboriginal people in many parts of Australia have *taught* me to consider country to be a conscious entity' (Rose 2000: 215, my emphasis).

There are at least three approaches to exploring the influence and impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture on European settler Australian culture. The first is to look for material evidence in the form of artefacts and technological 'know how' illustrating this change in historic sites. Oral and written evidence is important in analysing such material as the artefacts or material evidence may be indistinguishable from Indigenous forms. For example, there is evidence for such material in the pastoral industry where non-Indigenous stockmen were taught to make bark humpies and water troughs by Aboriginal drovers. The second is to look at attitudes and perceptions of non-Indigenous Australians today that may be manifested in art, literature (Thomas 1999) and



in the identification and expression of the places that are valued as 'heritage'. The third approach is more personal and perhaps more confronting: to explore the changes and influences on archaeological and anthropological practice brought about by interaction with Indigenous communities through analysing our own work and approaches. For example, Fuery, having recently returned from Yam Island, has explored the way in which her engagement with the community and individuals has resulted in changes to her research methods and worldview in a paper entitled *The Anthropologist as Self and Other: Alterity, Entanglement and Resemblance* (nd).

Social significance in the assessment of the heritage values of NSW forests

Perhaps evidence of cultural exchange from Indigenous culture to settler culture can be found in the way in which non-Indigenous Australians identify places of importance to them based on their 'perceived' Aboriginal value. Non-Indigenous Australians currently draw on aspects of Indigenous cosmology to explain their own attachment to natural landscapes.

I draw here on examples of places nominated for their social significance in the New South Wales forest reform process. The Comprehensive Regional Assessment of Forests (CRA) was completed in New South Wales in 1999. It covered a large area of the state and encompassed, at least in theory, all forested lands within the specified regions. It was clearly looking at conservation values on a *landscape* scale. Even the notion of the protection and classification of landscape for its essentially economic and natural values which comprised the main focus of the inter-governmental exercise results in a cultural landscape which reflects many of the values of our current society.

The data I use here came from a series of workshops held throughout the upper and lower north-east (UNE and LNE) CRA areas. This area included all forests in New South Wales from Murwillumbah in the north to the Central Coast in the south and as far west as Walcha (see Figure 5). The project was managed by Environment Australia and the data collected in the main by Chris Johnston (Context 1998). The following points are relevant regarding the methodologies employed to collect the data. Workshop participants were invitees from the geographic area around each of the workshop locations. Local coordinators were briefed and made responsible for identifying relevant organisations and individuals to be invited to the workshops. The composition of the workshops was primarily non-Indigenous, although Indigenous people were not excluded and may have attended some of the workshops.

Around 14 workshops were held in the area under discussion and each workshop had around 15 to 20 participants. Participants at each workshop were asked to identify places in the local area that were important to them and whether they considered those places to have historic, Indigenous, natural, social or aesthetic value. I do not intend to critique the methodology used in this process, although I recognise that there are many potential biases inherent in the data. All places identified by the participants were in fact being nominated for their importance to the community (i.e., social value) and determining other values such as natural, historic and Indigenous, was probably outside the expertise of most participants. However what I would like to look at are those places that people identified as having value to them as a community and which they also identified as having historic and/or Indigenous value as this goes directly to their perceptions of places and why they are significant.



As a result of the UNE workshops, the community identified a total of 526 places of value (see Table 1). Another 595 were identified from LNE. In LNE only 7 places (1.2 percent) were identified as having Indigenous values only. This is not surprising given that most participants were non-Indigenous. Similarly, 8 places (1.5 percent) were identified from UNE as having Indigenous value.

	UNE (total number 526)	LNE (total number 595)
Indigenous only	1.2%	1.5%
Historic only	11.8%	10.9%
Both Indigenous and historic only	1.3%	0.8%
Indigenous and any other (not historic)	12.2%	12.1%
Historic and other (not Indigenous)	41.1%	28.4%

Table 1: Types of places identified as percentages of the total number of places recorded

There are a number of interesting points arising from this data. For instance, most people saw historic value as relating to physical structures. These could either be isolated structures of value themselves, for example huts and other buildings, or a recognition of structures as part of an already important natural landscape, for example in the case of some forestry or mining ruins in forests. It did not seem to occur to people that such structures might also have Indigenous values arising, say, from Aboriginal participation in industry workforces. An interesting example was Kunderang Station. Kunderang East Pastoral station is now part of Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. The park and station were nominated at a number of workshops in a range of guises. The homestead was nominated as being of historic value (no Indigenous value noted) while massacre sites nearby were identified separately as being of both Indigenous and historic value. In fact the only places nominated solely for their combined historic and Indigenous values were missions and massacre sites.

The other interesting result is the assumption of Indigenous value in landscapes. From Table 1 we can see that around 12 percent of the places were identified as having Indigenous values as well as either aesthetic, natural or social value. These particular places were not identified as having historic value. How do we explain this assumption of Indigenous value inherent in places of social value to non-Indigenous people? From the places identified by participants at the workshops it would seem that there are two categories of places that people understand to be of Indigenous value. The first are places made or created (sites) from the pre-contact period, for example, art and deposit in caves and rock shelter sites, as well as engravings. The other are awe-inspiring landscapes that provide a spiritual connection for people. This raises the question about whether this constitutes an appropriation of Aboriginal spirituality, or if it is based on popular understanding of Aboriginal connections to landscape. In other words, do these non-Indigenous people feel or experience this spirituality, or are they inferring that these qualities exist from their knowledge of Aboriginal people and culture generally? While both alternatives are possible it would seem from comments provided by workshop participants that the former is the case.

The data as collected does not explain the rationale for each individual nomination. The communities' feeling for or attachment to the place is not necessarily documented. We have seen that people will seek to protect places by describing them in heritage terms and using scientific jargon that places them into the perceived categories for protection (Read 1996; for language and categories see Australian Committee for the IUCN 1998). If the allusion to 'Aboriginal' values was an attempt at this then one would have expected that the focus would have been on describing these places as significant in terms of archaeological features. It is likely that the allusion to Aboriginal values is a result of a community 'understanding' and endorsement of spiritual attachment to land. For most of

the participants in these workshops this would have matched their emotional and spiritual response to these places.

Gosden has commented that 'all life operates through recursiveness, which is to say that we make use of the past to create present and future action' (Gosden 1994: 188). In this instance it is possible that these landscapes and the way that people value them is evidence of cross-cultural transfer from Indigenous Australians to non-Indigenous Australians. This is an interesting phenomenon given our preoccupation as archaeologists in Australia with transfers of technology and skills from settler Australians to Aboriginal people. Non-Indigenous Australians have taken an aspect of Indigenous culture that they see as valuable, i.e., that part of Aboriginal belief systems that sees the spiritual in natural landscapes, and applied it to a variety of places of their own choosing.

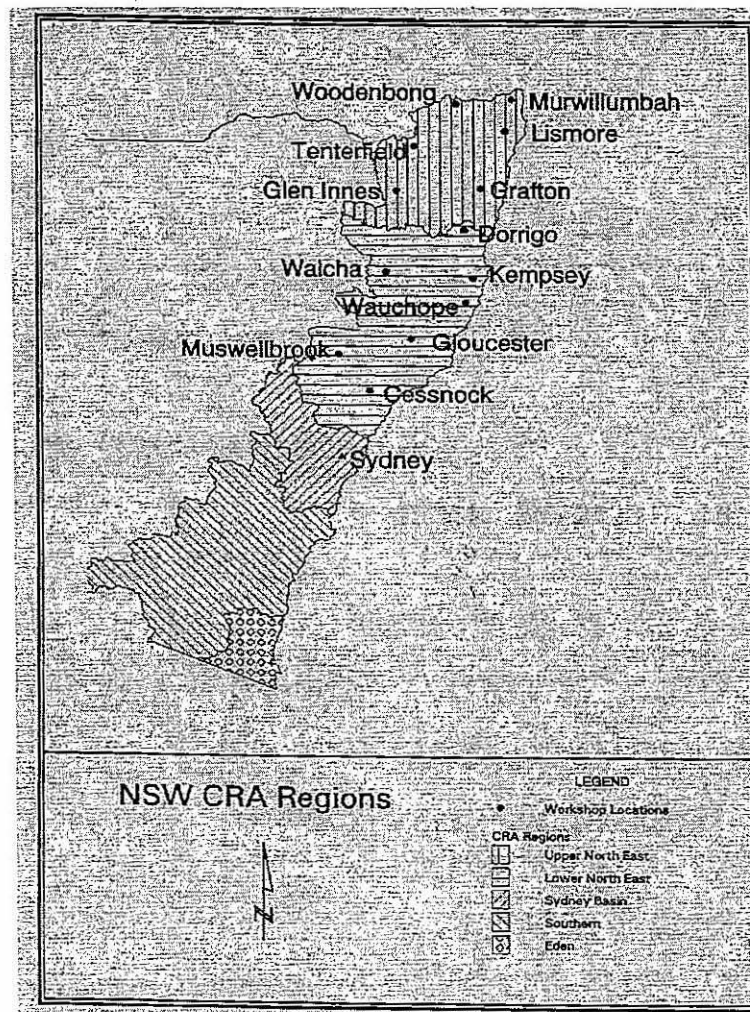


Figure 5: Map of the upper and lower north-east CRA regions with the locations of community workshops shown (Map produced by Context P/L 1998: 4).



Figure 6: Community groups identified Minnamurra Falls as a place of high community value in part because of its perceived Aboriginal significance. Photograph courtesy NPWS.



Figure 7: Myall Lakes was described as having 'Aboriginal values' and at the same time was described by participants in terms of its spirituality and tranquillity. Photograph courtesy NPWS.

DISCUSSION

A rose by any other name?

In the main, 'contact' archaeology has been concerned with the exchange of objects and raw materials (for example see Rainbird 2000: 32; Courtney and McNiven 1998). This has usually focused on exchange from a settler society to the Indigenous culture. Contact or shared history is currently being addressed by a number of archaeologists (Byrne 1998; Harrison 2000a, 2002, in prep; Baker 1999) and parallel studies in anthropology are similarly focusing on the transfer and adaptation of social practice or the impact of colonisation on Indigenous communities (Trigger 1992; Taylor 1984).

In contrast to much of the work carried out under the banner of historical archaeology in Australia, there is a growing body of research being undertaken which focuses on Indigenous responses to European invasion and emphasises the complexity of these shared histories (for example, Murray 1996a, 2000; Harrison 2000b; Byrne 1998). The level of current research interest and activity in this area was apparent at the post-contact workshop held in conjunction with the Australian Archaeological Association at Mandurah in 1999 (Harrison and Paterson 2000: 119–27). Similarly, for the first time the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology (ASHA) had a large component of its 1999 conference program devoted to papers in this area.

It is increasingly claimed that there is recognition amongst archaeologists that contact is a process rather than an event limited to the initial years of European settlement and that 'cross-cultural engagement should be placed within a long-term view of the processes of change and continuity in human social systems' (Torrence and Clarke 2000: 6). It is also argued that increasingly 'Indigenous societies are not merely regarded as the passive recipients of superior European technology, but are considered as active social agents in their dynamic and strategic relationships with external cultures' (Torrence and Clarke 2000: 5). Despite this there has been little research into changes to or influences on European culture (as manifest in Australia) resulting from this cultural exchange (although see Thomas 1999; Rose 2000; Fuary nd). Surely if this interaction or cross-cultural negotiation occurs as a process in which Aboriginal people are effective and active participants then there should be evidence of their influence on the settler culture.

Most places which are studied as part of shared heritage, contact archaeology or the archaeology of shared history relate largely to the immediate post-invasion landscape and the transformations and adaptations which were necessary for Indigenous and settler Australians to operate within it. This in part denies the obvious fact that the culture of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has continued to evolve, as communities both at the local and at broader levels (for example, nationhood) have emerged and developed. In the process new places have been created and other places have changed in terms of the values they hold for particular communities and individuals. For example, a place that may have once held significance to the European settlers only, such as an outpost of administration, may now be significant to contemporary Indigenous groups because of its symbolism in terms of the themes of invasion, resistance and incarceration. In this way our society and its component groups are continually renegotiating the ownership and meaning of heritage.

The rationale for community value/social significance

The recognition of social value is enshrined in key Australian heritage legislation and government policies, but until recently has largely been overlooked. This has led to an inequity in the effective conservation of places of community value and an over-emphasis on places of 'scientific' significance or value. In turn, this has meant that Australian community groups, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have had to develop an increasingly sophisticated grasp of scientific jargon to secure the conservation of places of value to them under the guise of other accepted and well-defined categories of significance (see also Read 1996; Sullivan 1996).

Many people have asked fundamental questions about the motivation and rationale behind the heritage industry and the places that it protects (McBryde 1985; Byrne 1993, 1998; Allison 1999). Does it protect a select group of places of significance to a specialist elite or does it protect places valued by the community? The growing demand for the recognition of social significance or community value in management decisions relating to heritage places requires us to think beyond the archaeological and architectural frameworks that have dominated heritage management in Australia to date.

Government authorities and regulators have introduced broad definitions of heritage. For example:

Australia's heritage, shaped by nature and history, is an inheritance passed from one generation to the next. It encompasses many things—the way we live, the traditions we hold dear, our history and values. It is also reflected in the natural and cultural diversity of places and objects that help us to understand our past and our effect on the Australian Landscape (AHC 1998).

Similarly then heritage places are described as:

... either natural or cultural places. In reality, heritage places usually possess many different values, ranging from natural values at one end of the spectrum through to cultural values at the other. For example, the vast landscape of Kakadu contains important ecosystems, wonderful Aboriginal paintings and engravings, sites of great spiritual significance and interesting historic features. Understanding this complex heritage place means recognising all elements and respecting all values (AHC 1998).

While over recent years language has altered to incorporate *values*, in practice people documenting and assessing heritage significance treat 'values' as if they are synonymous with objects or elements. Many practitioners have difficulty in assessing or analysing statements from communities regarding values; these are often expressed in terms relating to scientific significance. The tendency then is for experts to correct them rather than to understand and evaluate them. So for instance in documenting forest places in New South Wales, communities may express their attachment to a place in terms of its biodiversity, habitat value or Aboriginal archaeological value because they are aware that these categories of scientific significance are well-defined and protected by authorities.

The recognition and exploration of social value (see also Johnston 1994; Walker 1998) and the further development of investigative tools including contact archaeology and other sophisticated research methodologies, such as some of those currently being applied to cultural landscape studies (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Bender 1993; Ryden 1993) and studies around heritage and identity (Ashworth and Larkham 1994; Greer 1995; McIntyre-Tamwoy 2001) will give rise to new challenges for heritage managers and owners. To a large extent archaeological endeavour in this area is a direct response

to community demands (Greer and others 2002). In many Aboriginal communities, such as those in northern Cape York, a number of important places are part of the recent past and within living memory. There, as elsewhere in Australia, contact archaeology cannot easily be reduced to the dispassionate study of material culture. In most cases communities or individuals have an ownership or knowledge of these sites which is difficult for researchers or managers to deny. There are many potential relationships between the research and management of these sites or places and contemporary issues such as native title, national identity and reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has ranged widely over the areas of cultural sites and places, cultural exchange and social value. There are four main points regarding cultural exchange emerging from this paper. Firstly, although it is now popular to write of contact as a process of negotiation and cultural exchange, most studies have concentrated on evidence of technology transfer from settler culture to Indigenous cultures. Secondly, if contact is a negotiation then changes should be evident in both cultures. Thirdly, while it is possible that we can find archaeological evidence of such change, perhaps we gain valuable insights into this process by considering non-archaeological evidence such as changes in community belief systems. Fourthly, the value that people places on sites and places may in itself be a product of cultural negotiation which results in changing attitudes within the dominant culture.

For archaeologists, especially those working in the field of contact archaeology and/or heritage management, there are several messages arising from the points discussed in this paper. Firstly, as they relate to the recent past, many 'contact' archaeological sites will be of high community value. In particular, local communities will have imbued them with meanings that need to be considered and acknowledged even though in the course of the work they may be challenged (see, for example, Greer 1995; Greer 1999). The sites or places may be of value to the community because they:

- relate to events within the living memory of community members
- may contribute to a community (state or nation's) sense of identity
- may shed light on, or inform, some of the community's (state or nation's) major contemporary cultural issues such as reconciliation, multiculturalism, national identity and shared heritage (Greer and others 2002).

Secondly, many places of special importance to communities are non-archaeological. Places of high social significance are often natural landscapes and while one may argue that they are a cultural construct in the very way in which they are perceived and used by the community, they do not have physical manifestations of this cultural use.

Thirdly, some contact archaeological sites may not have social significance or community value. Either they may not be known or understood by the community or they may relate to events or aspects of that history that are not considered by anyone other than the archaeologist to be important.

To effectively address and consider the social significance or cultural value of places we as specialist practitioners (whether archaeologists, historians, architects or anthropologists) must realise that social significance or community value is determined



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