

VIRTUS HERITAGE



VIRTUSHERITAGE

Newsletter Issue 1 July, 2015

Editorial	1
Projects	2
Team	3
Community	5
National Archaeology Week Mapoon Unmarked Graves Stage 3	
Services	6
Ground Penetrating Radar Residue Analysis	
Client Feedback Survey Results	7
Noticeboard	8



Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter. We will send this publication out every six months as a forum to communicate with our clients, community members, agencies and other technical partners whom we collaborate with. In this forum we also feature a selection of our current projects, technical services and insights into current heritage policies and archaeological practice.

In this edition, we outline our expanding team and feature some of our new services. I discuss the results of our client feedback survey and our continued focus on value and service.

Ethical archaeological practice with good heritage outcomes is integral to our company. In May we partnered with Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre to provide a toddler activity day to celebrate National Archaeology Week. In June, with Prof. Conyers in partnership with Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, we obtained a third stage of funding for geoarchaeological investigations of unmarked graves in Mapoon.

We hope you enjoy reading our first newsletter and look forward to hearing your feedback.

Mary-Jean



PROJECTS



COMMUNITY



SERVICES

VIRTUSHERITAGE

<http://www.virtusheritage.com.au/>

PO Box 101 Pottsville NSW 2489

EMAIL: virtusheritage@gmail.com

PHONE/FAX: (02) 6676 4354

Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/virtusheritagensw>

PROJECTS



Gledswood Homestead, Camden, NSW

Virtus Heritage were engaged by Weir Phillips Architects and the Gledswood Trust to prepare Aboriginal and historical archaeological management plans for the Gledswood Homestead, a State significant registered heritage item. These plans were developed in consultation with several registered Aboriginal parties including the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Gledswood Homestead is significant due to its convict heritage and historical connections with the Chisholm family. The Homestead includes original features, trellised gardens, carriageway and original convict lock up. Heritage Impact Statements and a section 60 application is currently being finalised for future restoration works for this property.



Cultural Heritage Training and Heritage Guidelines, Greater Taree City Council

Virtus Heritage were engaged by Greater Taree City Council (GTCC) to undertake Aboriginal cultural heritage training for staff and a review and update of GTCC's Aboriginal heritage guidelines and checklists. Julian and Mary-Jean presented this training in Taree over two days in partnership with the Purfleet-Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council (PTLALC), a Powerpoint presentation of due diligence and legislative requirements, common site types and archaeological overview of the region. Artefact recognition utilising artefacts from PTLALC's collection was also an important part of the training. Site recording sessions at a local midden and artefact scatter were also undertaken to provide hands on experience of site recording, artefact recognition and site management



Aboriginal heritage testing and salvage excavations, Wilsons River, South Lismore

Aboriginal archaeological investigations (test and salvage excavation, surface collection and mechanical salvage) were completed by our team of ten archaeologists and several representatives of the South Lismore Aboriginal community over a three month program. This project included manual and mechanical excavation to depth and was a commitment by Hydrox Nominees Pty Limited and Mainbrace Constructions (NSW) for a floodway channel for Lismore City Council. Geomorphological investigations were led by Dr Peter Mitchell (OAM). As part of this project numerous common opal artefacts were salvaged and smaller percentages of chert, quartz and basalt artefacts. The common opal artefacts were not local to the project area, brought in from a source either at Tintenbar or the Nightcap Mountains, Nimbin. Artefact analysis is currently being undertaken as part of the post-excavation stage of this project in consultation with the Aboriginal community.



TEAM



We have expanded our team since the establishment of Virtus Heritage in 2010. While our main office is located in Northern NSW, we are also supported by our archaeologists in Brisbane and Newcastle. Our team has extensive experience throughout Australia and overseas in the investigation, assessment and management of archaeological sites and cultural landscapes. Here we introduce some of our team members and highlight their key experience.

NORTHERN NSW



JULIAN TRAVAGLIA

Julian has worked as an archaeologist for more than ten years and has been involved in projects spanning both Aboriginal and historical archaeology. He has produced Aboriginal archaeological assessments and due diligence reports requiring project management, extensive research, report writing, Aboriginal community liaison, personnel and fieldwork management. Julian has experience in conducting Aboriginal surveys, excavation (manual and mechanical) and monitoring programs, and has undertaken detailed recording of Aboriginal stone tools for various projects and produced salvage reports. Julian has undertaken historical heritage research; heritage searches; fieldwork surveys; and reporting requirements for Historical Heritage Assessments.

RACHAEL MACKAY

Rachael has worked in executive administration positions within the Departments of Justice and Attorney-General, Education and Training and as executive manager of corporate services for the Public Service Commissioner in the Queensland Government. Rachael's experience encompasses a broad range of initiatives and programs spanning employment, rehabilitation and education and training outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Rachael has completed various studies, including in business management and organisational behaviour. Rachael is based in Northern NSW and provides administrative support to Virtus Heritage, including finalisation of technical reports and proposals.



DR EMMA ST PIERRE

Emma is a qualified archaeologist who has worked with Mary-Jean on projects since 2005. Her PhD research focused on Uranium-series dating and geochemical analysis techniques to assist in developing chronological tools for cave deposits (based in western Flores, Indonesia). Emma has more than 10 years experience as a heritage professional in Australia, undertaking Aboriginal and historical assessments and developing cultural heritage management and conservation plans. She has managed large scale Aboriginal subsurface investigation programs and has developed excellent relationships with statutory agencies and local Aboriginal community groups. She is experienced in Aboriginal and historical artefact identification, recording and analysis. Emma has worked throughout Queensland and NSW and is based in south-east Queensland.



CHRIS JENNINGS

Chris has more than 10 years experience as a professional archaeologist in both New Zealand and Australia. He has worked for Virtus Heritage since 2012. Chris has undertaken both Aboriginal and historical archaeological assessments and subsurface investigations, including project management and field team leadership components of these projects. He is proficient in historical research, having undertaken historical and Aboriginal artefact identification, recording, and analysis. Chris has developed excellent relationships with local Aboriginal community groups in NSW, QLD and WA. Chris has expertise using illustration software for technical drawing and GIS software. Chris is based in south-east Queensland and has worked throughout Queensland and NSW.



MICHAEL (MIKE) PARKER

Mike has more than 25 years professional archaeological and heritage experience. His professional experience includes international and Australian archaeological projects and consultancies. Mike is experienced in Aboriginal and historical heritage and archaeological assessments and investigations in NSW, and has an excellent professional reputation with NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and local Aboriginal community groups. Mike has worked for Virtus Heritage since 2011. He lives in the Newcastle region and has extensive experience on Aboriginal and historical archaeological projects, particularly in the Hunter Valley, Newcastle and Sydney regions.



COMMUNITY



Mapoon Unmarked Aboriginal Graves Project - Stage 3

Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council partnered with Virtus Heritage and Prof. Lawrence B. Conyers have successfully applied for additional funding from the Western Cape Communities Co-Existence Agreement Northern Regional Trust to undertake geophysical and archaeological investigations in Mapoon for unmarked Aboriginal graves. Mapoon is approximately 90 kilometres north of Weipa in northwestern, Cape York, Queensland. 'Looking after our old people', the final resting place of ancestors is an integral part of caring for country and cultural practice in Mapoon. This is the third stage of our continued commitment to Mapoon families to identify and protect these important cultural places. Prof. Conyers, Mary-Jean, Julian, Chris and Emma will work with MASC, Mapoon Elders and families on this project in August 2015.

Earlier stages of this work are published in these sources:

The International Journal of Historical Archaeology

<https://www.academia.edu/4200895>

Australian Geographic

<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2012/03/preserving-aboriginal-history>

Prof. Conyers' book

"Interpreting Ground-Penetrating Radar for Archaeology" (2013).

NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK



A mini dig for mini archaeologists took place at Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre (PNBC) during National Archaeology Week. Virtus Heritage partnered with PNBC to organise an archaeological activity day for toddlers as part of our commitment to public archaeology and local community. More than 40 children and family members attended the event, which aimed to get toddlers and pre-school children a taste of the excitement of archaeology. Emma, Chris and Julian, assisted by Lily and Tony Crockett, helped the mini diggers excavate 'artefacts' (rubber dinosaurs and other types of squeaky rubber bath animals) from the sand pit using 'trowels', 'spades' and hand tools. Kites, colouring in kits of Dora the Explorer and Diego were also given to the children. Photographs of the mini dig and National Archaeology week are featured on our Facebook page

GROUND PENETRATING RADAR

GPR is a non-invasive archaeological investigation technology that transmits radar pulses from a surface antenna into the ground, allowing a picture of the subsurface to be generated. Virtus Heritage conducts GPR surveys specializing in grave mapping, ideal for both traditional interments and European-style graves. With expertise in archaeology, historical research, Aboriginal consultation, oral history interviewing, community workshops and project management, Virtus Heritage provides a coordinated approach to cultural heritage projects requiring GPR and collaborates with communities to protect these graves. Our GPR principal investigator is leading world expert Prof. Lawrence Conyers, a professor at the University of Denver (Department of Anthropology). He is the principal investigator of projects in Australia and around the world, and recently headed the Mapoon Mission Cemetery project in northern Queensland using GPR magnetics, low altitude photos and GIS mapping. Prof. Conyers has an established working relationship with Virtus Heritage. Prof. Conyers has written several books on GPR and pioneered its use in archaeological contexts. Prof. Conyers has written several books on GPR and pioneered its use in archaeological contexts. He has experience ranging from investigations at World Heritage sites such as Petra, Jordan to US Defence projects, including war graves, missing in



Prof. Lawrence Conyers

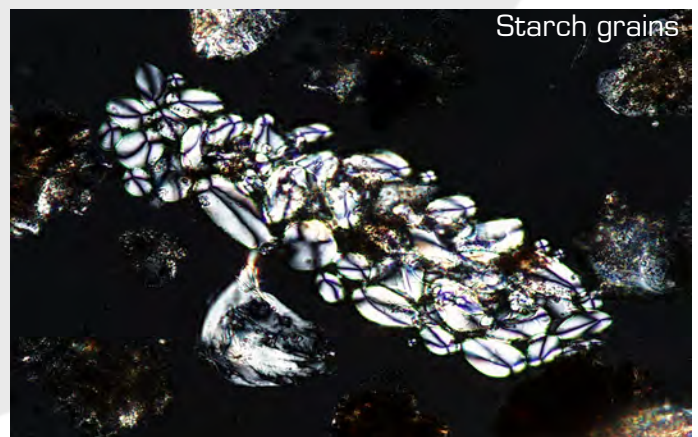
action and the identification of unmarked graves for war crimes investigations. Prof. Conyers will be working with our team on two community projects in August 2015.

RESIDUE AND USE-WEAR ANALYSIS



Residue and use-wear analysis can be used to help understand the function of artefacts based on the microscopic traces of damage or wear or material remains on their working surfaces. We use optical microscopy to identify use-wear and residues such as plant and animal remains. We also have links with the University of Queensland, School of Earth Sciences Geochemistry Laboratory and Radiogenic Isotope Facility to access Mass Spectrometers for detailed elemental analysis of artefacts such as stone tools and pottery.

Our Residue analyst Dr Emma St Pierre, completed her Honours (Archaeology) in residue analysis with a focus on pottery and also has experience analysing Aboriginal stone tools. Emma has a PhD in Archaeological Science with a focus on geochemistry and is able to conduct detailed trace element and isotope analysis of stone artefacts for sourcing studies.



Starch grains

CLIENT FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

In November 2014, we asked key clients to answer an online survey to assist us to develop our company, gauge client expectations and gain feedback on aspects of our performance on archaeological projects.

The results were positive, with excellent feedback on our performance. Clients indicated that professional experience and reputation with agencies and community groups was their highest consideration for engaging an archaeologist. Price and hourly rate were considered second last, and, both surprising and concerning, academic and professional qualifications were considered last.

Statutory agencies such as the Office of Environment and Heritage will not grant an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit if an archaeological assessment has not been prepared by an archaeologist with relevant academic and professional qualifications in archaeology in NSW. Similarly, an archaeological assessment will not stand up in the Land and Environment Court if challenged and not prepared by an archaeologist with appropriate academic qualifications, at least a Bachelor of Arts or Science in Archaeology with an Honours degree.

More than 83% of participants agreed that further collaboration with Indigenous communities during archaeological components of a project was a positive capability. We are exploring different forms of collaboration in 2015 during the archaeological assessment and investigations of projects with Indigenous communities, including research on cultural knowledge of stone resources as part of artefact analysis, opportunities for Elders and younger generations to be involved in artefact recording and analysis, and community days during final repository. We are also engaging local Indigenous communities through support of research grants and community heritage projects e.g. Mapoon, Queensland, supported with grants in Taree and Tweed areas for local Aboriginal community organisations, and through National Archaeology Week activities.

More than 80% of all survey participants felt that our joint badged projects, with other archaeological consultants and specialists providing additional specialist skills and resources to a project streamlined through Virtus Heritage, was a positive capability. In response, we have increased our technical partnerships with specialists in geomorphology, heritage architecture, skeletal remains, rock art (chronology and conservation), geoarchaeology, dating and geochronology, ground penetrating radar and geophysical investigations. These technical partnerships are now detailed on our website. We have also increased our capabilities in our team to provide a greater local presence in Newcastle-Lake Macquarie, Northern NSW, Gold Coast and Brisbane.

Thank you to all our clients who participated in the survey. Your feedback was invaluable.

NOTICEBOARD

In this section of our newsletter, we will be providing information and general news on our team's accomplishments and general news over the last six months.

SIEVING EQUIPMENT

Sieving equipment is essential when undertaking archaeological subsurface testing or excavation programs. Virtus Heritage maintains two large sieving stations consisting of 5mm and 2mm nested sieves of high tensile steel mesh designed by Julian specifically for archaeological excavation. These sieves allow up to four persons on each sieve to ensure our sieving programs are completed efficiently and are compliant with professional standards. Our sieves were used on several of our digs this year and are saving our clients time and money!



LEAP SUMMIT

In June, Emma and Chris attended the Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand's LEAP Summit in Brisbane. We are looking forward to attending future conferences and seminars for EIANZ. Our teams have recently joined the NSW and Queensland EIANZ chapters and will use this forum as another means to keep up to date with broader environmental practice and management policy and issues that affect our clients.

PHD COMPLETE

Mary-Jean has finally completed and is awarded her PhD in Archaeology from the University of Queensland. Mary-Jean's thesis is accessible on the University of Queensland's online thesis collection. Community reports and thesis hard copies are also lodged in Mapoon's Keeping Place room and library. Mary-Jean's dissertation included six years of research collaborating with Mapoon Elders and families and former missionary families on the cultural heritage of the mission time and the controversial closure of the Mapoon Mission in 1963. Mapoon's mission time cultural heritage is presented as a case study to explore how cultural heritage values are generated and contributes to existing research on missionisation in Australia through examining the relationships between missionary and Indigenous families. This study concludes historical trauma from violence and dispossession, including the destruction of one's home, affects wellbeing and is intricately connected to places of high cultural significance. The thesis also explores how archaeological practice and other acts of commemoration has potential as catharsis for redressing trauma experienced in the past and may itself be a process of value creation.



Mapoon Mission, 1938 (Source: Nelson Collection, Fryer Library University of Queensland)

NOTICEBOARD

SUMMARY REPORTS

As part of consents and permits in NSW and Queensland, summary reports and plain English reports are requirements by statutory agencies to better communicate with community members and non-technical audiences the outcomes of archaeological assessments and investigations. We have been using InDesign and Publisher packages to design a higher level graphics based summary report, that can also assist our clients with showcasing these projects for education and marketing and for better use within the community. We have received excellent feedback from Office of Environment and Heritage on the format and content of our assessment and salvage reports and summary reports to date, but we want to take reporting one step further and provide a higher end more user friendly pictorial version of summary reports as an additional service. Two of these new summary reports are currently being finalised with existing clients but we would like to gain feedback from other clients, agencies and communities on the design and development of these reports.



RIDE TO CONQUER CANCER

On 15-16th August, Emma will participate in the Ridge to Conquer Cancer, a 2 day 200 kilometre ride in South East Queensland and is in the process of raising funds for biomedical research at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. If you would like to donate money for cancer research, click on the green Donate Now (please) button on this link:

http://br15.conquercancer.org.au/site/TR/Events/Brisbane2015?px=1558752&pg=personal&fr_id=1180



WEBSITE UPDATE

Our website is being updated and contains information on our expanding services and team. Check out our new "[Technical Partners](#)" and other revised pages.



