During the months of May and June, Dr Stuart Bedford began preliminary fieldwork relating to his new ARC funded project “Investigating monumentality in Melanesia: the archaeology of ritual architecture on the islands of Malakula, Vanuatu”. Prior to the fieldwork archival research was undertaken at a number of institutions in an attempt to establish an ethnographic baseline for the islands of Malakula. Returning this information to communities has attracted huge attention, particularly unpublished photographs taken in the 1880s. Initial fieldwork focused in the Port Sandwich-Lamap area of south Malakula, where the early historic records, from James Cook right through to the early colonial period, provide a rich source of information relating to settlement patterns, population figures and a whole series of named villages long since abandoned. Massive depopulation following European settlement in the area has left much of the landscape apparently deserted, but local knowledge of the entire region, including all stone architectural features remains strong, although often contested. Two teams were set up so that both survey and excavation could be carried out at the same time. These were led by Dr Bedford, Dr Frederique Valentin (CNRS, Paris), Marcelin Abong (Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre [VKS]), Richard Shing and Brigitte Laboukly (both VKS). Excavation was concentrated at the site of the 1886 French military post and later commercial operations, while survey was focused on the terrain that surrounds the extensive harbour. Some 70 stone architectural features were recorded. An 1899 photograph found in the archives of the National Museum of New Zealand provided an intriguing clue to early commercial activities in the region. Cross referencing this photograph with other archival sources we have been able to establish that this photograph was almost certainly taken on the 2nd of August 1899 during the visit of the tourist ship the S.S. Wai-kare and its 180 passengers. While no oral traditions relating to the large store remain, archaeological excavation soon revealed its foundations and extent. Tantalising artefactual remains related to the French military occupation were also recovered.

Soon after fieldwork on Malakula, Dr Bedford travelled to New Zealand in late June and presented the preliminary survey and excavation results at the annual archaeological association meeting held in Cambridge. Marketing the merits of a PhD at the ANU also attracted a positive response from a number of students.
Our return to Big Willum swamp was driven by the exciting results from last year's cores which revealed that the water body is 8,000 years old...
New Student Bio: Sarah Kim Youngblutt (Eskae)

I am originally from northern British Columbia, near the Alaska border. Prior to PhD work, I spent 8 years at the University of British Columbia where I completed a double major in Asian Area Studies and Anthropological Archaeology with a specialization in Sanskrit language. My Masters work, also at the UBC was in the Institute of Asian Research, within the Masters of Asian Pacific Policy Studies program. For my Masters, I studied policies of human security surrounding UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia. This work brought me to the Universite de Montreal where I completed the first year of my PhD with a specific focus on Cambodian monumental architecture. I have now come to the ANU because of its fine reputation as the best university in the world for Southeast Asian research. The Department of Archaeology and Natural History is well respected for its interdisciplinary approach to ancient landscapes, which is essential for the work that I now engage in.

Project Title:
"Contextualizing the iconography, inscriptions and monuments of Champa and Chenla within the 5th-8th century"

In line with the ambitions of the ANH, my work takes a multidisciplinary approach to learn more about the prehistory and cultural transition to the historic period in Asia.

Centered on the mainland of Southeast Asia, my research approaches a complex problem in the dating and translation of monumental architecture on the mainland of Southeast Asia. It applies ancient Indian architectural treatise to analyze the foundations and surrounding landscape of three contemporary 6th-8th century sites: Wat Phu, Sambor Prei Kuk and My Son. Within fieldwork, I will examine temple foundations, balanced by inscriptive information and architecture at the sites; to contextualize the monuments within their surrounding terrain to learn the full extent each site was planned in accordance with Vaastu, or ancient Indian temple planning. In summary, this study presents a fresh approach to three contemporary sites of Indian inspired monumental architecture, two (My Son and Wat Phu) have been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. Sambor Prei Kuk sits upon the UNESCO tentative list. I have a background in Sanskrit language and will build on this to study with Dr. McComas Taylor at the ANU over the next few years. With advance training, I will examine inscriptions identified at these sites to learn more about cultural relationships that may have existed between the mainland of Southeast Asia and resident populations of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, who developed the Kannada and Pallava Granthi scripts and associated treatise for architectural planning.

New Postdoctoral Fellow Bio: Julien Louys

Julien is a vertebrate palaeontologist and palaeoecologist. He received a Bachelor of Mathematics from the University of Newcastle, Australia and a Bachelor of Sciences (Hons) and PhD from the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He completed a three year postdoctoral research assistant position at Liverpool John Moores University, UK, examining the use of taxon-free variables in palaeoecological analyses. Following the completion of this project, he worked for 12 months at the Queensland Museum as curator of Geosciences. He successfully secured a University of Queensland Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2012 with projects examining Australian marsupial palaeontology, particularly Pliocene faunas, as well as community ecology of Pleistocene/Holocene small mammal assemblages. He has also been involved in hominin and large mammal palaeoecological research of the Plio-Pleistocene of East Africa and Southeast Asia. Julien is currently working on the project "From Sunda to Sahul: understanding modern human dispersal, adaptation and behaviour en route to Australia".
Mound Hopping in Kakadu
by Billy Ó Foghlú

On July 8th, Lotty Feakins and Dr Annie Clarke (of Sydney University) and Dr Sally Brockwell and myself journeyed to Jabiru town in Kakadu National Park to commence our latest fieldwork season.

Lotty and Annie (in concordance with Lotty’s Honours thesis) investigated and surveyed, in detail, a number of historical camps within the park that have potential links with notable figures such as Tom Cole, and Yorkie Bill. The study of these camps offers historical, archaeological and forensic insight into Kakadu’s respectively recent past; a complex time during the rise of the water buffalo that was (least among a host of elements) both the product and instigator of cultural and social shifts. This is a period in time that traditional prehistoric archaeology has sometimes been known to overshadow in terms of general preference. Lotty’s thesis is not only shedding light on the historical past of the Kakadu region, it is also highlighting the major, and overlooked importance of historical-archaeological investigation worldwide.

Sally and myself (in conjunction with my own thesis) surveyed, analysed and sampled a large number of mound sites throughout Kakadu. These included natural rises and ancient megapode mounds that yielded archaeological evidence of human exploitation; along with human-made earth mounds and modern oven-mound sites. The four of us had the privilege on the Animal Tracks Safari tour that operates from Cooinda Lodge, see: www.animaltracks.com.au to experience the activity of such oven-mound sites first hand and to sample the delectable wares that can be produced. This included whistle duck, magpie goose and buffalo meat roasted through paperbark in a traditional earth oven; estuarine mussels and native water chestnuts (we had been taught how to gather) that were cooked over an open fire along with some freshly baked damper and billy-tea. A crocodile was sighted during fieldwork, however it was approximately four hundred metres away, about twenty centimetres long and fleeing in the opposite direction. Aside from this terror, and a host of fenced buffalo, other animals sighted included the illusive bush turkey, a number of barking owls and about two thousand whistle ducks. The latter are essentially indistinguishable in their territorial cries to hand-squeaked rubber ducks, hence their name.

The final days of fieldwork saw us returning to Darwin, to the shell laden mounds of Virginia. Sally, Dr Trish Bourke and I surveyed these sites, two of which (Trish recently discovered) had originally been surveyed to some extant by George Goyder almost a century and a half prior to our own efforts. Finds included a number of lithics, a potential weir, a Winchester 30-30 bullet casing and two dirt bike enthusiasts, all of which were of course left in situ.

In sum, insightful fieldwork and a wonderful experience; much was learned. The task of processing the data can begin.
New Staff Bio: Elena Piotto

Hi Everyone,
I completed my Honours in archaeology at UQ last year and while my thesis is on a Cultural Heritage topic (The Gumminguru Aboriginal Stone Arrangement site), my main interest is the behavioural modernity debate and how it fits (or not) in the Australasian region. I am currently working as an RA for Sue O’Connor and her Laureate project and hoping to move into a PhD candidature sometime in the future.
As an undergrad I was involved in some fieldwork conducted by ANU so I do know some of you already but I’m looking forward to meeting everyone else and getting involved. My room number is 2604, so if you are up this way please feel free to pop in and say hello.

Elena Piotto

About SAA:SEARCH by Sarah Youngblutt

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead

The Society for Exploration, Archaeology, Research, Culture and History (SAA:SEARCH)

In 2009, with the support of four professors from the Institute of Asian Research, in the College For Interdisciplinary Studies (CFIS) at the University of British Columbia, in Canada, this society was born (please see www.searcheologies.org)

For two years, it worked tirelessly to gather laboratory equipment, textbooks and computers for the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA), Cambodia from across faculties at the University of British Columbia. UBC was generous enough to allow for an on-site storage space for all of their no-longer needed goods. In late 2011, a container filled to the brim was shipped from Vancouver to Phnom Penh: (http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2011/06/30/recycling-with-a-heart-ubc-students-efforts-help-cambodian-university/) and was received by UNESCO Phnom Penh, who kindly assisted with the customs clearance. A ceremony was held at the Royal University of Fine Arts and the goods were brought to the faculty, to help them teach archaeology.

As the founding director of the socie-
ty, I now bring SAA:SEARCH to the ANU, where I am working on a PhD concurrent. I seek a space, volunteers and enthusiasm towards gathering equipment and supplies that we may no longer need (that are in great working condition), to deliver to the Royal University of Fine Arts in Cambodia. As I am new to the ANU, I would love to hear more from scholars about universities that you engage with in the field, who may also appreciate the re-rerouting of supplies.

Ultimately, international educational capacity building departments of archaeology is a win-win for everyone as it fosters capacity building and may lead to economic growth for the host country, but also, it gives us an opportunity to give back, and begin linkages in cross cultural communication and mutual respect with local communities on the ground.

The potential of this society is only beginning here at the ANU, it is in its infancy. Please contact me with any questions, or to speak further about collaborations:
syoungblutt@gmail.com

Pictured: Prior to the shipping of the container- 2011 Vancouver BC, Canada
East Timorese Delegation visits Kakadu

From Friday 21st June until Monday 24th of June, ANH staff member Dr Sally Brockwell, and ANH PhD student Ms Tristen Jones, hosted a delegation of East Timorese government and UNESCO officials on a tour through Kakadu National Park (KNP), N.T. The East Timor delegation, led by ANH graduate, Dr Nuno Oliveira, now the current advisor to the Secretary of Arts and Culture in East Timor. The delegation made up of a total of fourteen delegates, included the Secretary of State for Arts and Culture, Mrs Isabel Ximenes, the Director General of Arts and Culture Mrs Cecília Assis. In addition the delegation included the Director of the Department of Forestry, Mr Manuel Mendes, the Director of the new Nino Konis Santana National Park, Mr Pedro Silva, leaders from Timor’s UNESCO National Commission, and the Head of Tutuala village in the National Park, Mr António Fonseca.

The objective of the trip was for delegates to gain an in-depth practical knowledge of joint management structures of National Parks, as is utilised in KNP, with a particular focus on the management of significant cultural heritage rock art sites. The delegation toured Park Headquarters in both Darwin and Jabiru, meeting Park staff and attending workshops overviewing the management structure and management plans for KNP. The delegates then visited rock art sites of Ubir and Nourlangie Rock, followed by a visit to the Warradjan Cultural Centre and a Yellow Waters cruise. All of these site visits were hosted by Kakadu Board of Management members, and Traditional Owners for their respective countries; Ryan Burraway, Michael Bangalang, Alfred Nayinggul and Violet Lawson. The feedback from delegation participants was very positive, with delegates commenting on the breadth of knowledge and experiences gained from both practical site visits and interaction with Parks staff and Traditional Owners. Overall the trip was a resounding success.
Research in Archaeology and Natural History at the ANU School of Culture, History and Language aims to understand prehistoric human societies, the environments in which they developed and the environmental consequences of human presence. Departmental research ranges from southeast Asia and the Pacific, through the tropical forests of New Guinea and the savannahs of Australia, to the islands of Oceania.

Field research in ANH is supported by well-equipped laboratories that were fully updated and refurbished during 2009. Our laboratories support research into prehistoric textiles, archaeobotanical remains, rock art, prehistoric environments, zoological material and ceramics. ANH houses the largest pollen reference collection in Australia, as well as plant, bone, shell and ceramic collections. We also have access to world-class ANU facilities for archaeological dating, stable isotope analysis, and electron microscopy.