Welcome to the third 2019 issue of Yarnupings!

We would like to thank everyone who answered the survey. We took all of your votes and feedback on board, and hope to give you more of what you want in the coming issues! As to the name, *Yarnupings* was still very popular, so we decided to stick with it.

This issue attempts some new features, including little bios about some our new volunteers, a “spotlight on” an important Aboriginal figure, a show and tell of our new model fish trap, a spread on the upcoming NAIDOC week, and some other hopefully interesting pieces.

For our next issue, if you would like to be featured, send us a short paragraph of why you became an AHO Volunteer, OR if you have a question, person, or a vague something that you would like to know more about, let us know be emailing ahovolunteer@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au and we will endeavour to answer your question in the next newsletter!

This was taken at Flat Rock Gully recently, when Dina was on an education walk. The AHO certainly gets to visit some beautiful places in the their partnering councils!

We’ve gone viral!

That’s right, the AHO now has it’s own YouTube channel! You can find us by using the YouTube search bar or using this link https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyv8jHQrz9bO7j-Uaih-L5Q. Dave, Karen and Phil have put their acting skills to the test in some new videos!

Karen takes you on a guided walk, and Dave and Phil teach you about rock art and engraving sites in our local area!
Brewarrina Fish Traps

The Brewarrina fish traps (known as Baiame's Ngunnhu [pronounced By-ah-mee's noon-oo]) are located within the Barwon River, in north west New South Wales. The complex dry-stone walls are around 400m long, making it the largest recorded fish trap in Australia. The exact age of the traps is unknown, with some locals claiming it to be 40,000 years old, although no reliable dates have been produced. However, other fish traps from around Australia are around 3,000 years old, so it is likely to be at least that old.

The stones are arranged to form a net across the river in a design that is said to have been revealed by Baiame (the ancestral creation being) who threw his net over the river. Baiame and his two sons, Booma-ooma-nowi and Ghinda-inda-mui then built the traps.

The Ngemba people, who share the responsibility with other Traditional Owners, including Morowari, Paarkinji, Weilwan, Barabinja, Ualarai and Kamilaroi, look after the fish traps.

The net design allows fish to pass through into the stone pens in large numbers during the migration season. The stone nets were built by placing large stones along the tops of the walls, and the curved forms of individual traps probably enhanced stability. The teardrop-shaped curves act as arches against the weight of the water with the tail sections following the lines of the currents. As the stone walls were larger and sturdier at the base, they were resistant to the flowing water of the river.

Several clans from the area likely shared the fish traps, and each clan had its own trap to use and maintain. The abundance of food meant that corroborees, initiation ceremonies, and meetings for trade and barter would have taken place along the river. The walls of the fish traps were damaged in the 1860s, with some of the stones being used to keep a new crossing in place. The fish traps have since been rebuilt by the Traditional Owners in the late 1990s.

The Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps was listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register on 11 August 2000.

References:
http://nationalunitygovernment.org/content/ancient-site-australias-outback
https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/brewarrina
Brewarrina Fish Traps: We made one... well, a model one!

We, at the AHO, get a little sick of sitting at our desks. Sometimes when this happens we bust out the hot glue gun and get creative. Our model of the Brewarrina fish traps is on show in the AHO museum, and was made by David, Dina and Catherine.

This looks river shaped, right?

I’m going to add “artist” to my resume.

Ah, my vision is coming together!

The final product!

So far, visiting children have loved the final product. Watching the running river while talking about Aboriginal fishing practices is a great way to educate younger audiences!
Treaties are legal mechanisms between two parties that recognise one another’s sovereignty. Like any negotiation some people get stuff and some people lose stuff. So far this whole invasion meant us losing stuff, getting scraps, and being told to be thankful...”

“The thing we want recognised is our sovereignty. We fought, we were massacred, we were subject to genocidal policies but not once did we give up our sovereignty. Time may have gone on but the elephant in the sharehouse remains and continues to grow. Most colonised nation have treaties. In fact, Australia is the only Commonwealth country without one. They aren't perfect (look at Aotearoa) but they are tangible and a good bloody start...”

“...Back in 2012, I was asked by the Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council (now the Koorie Youth Council) to write a piece on my concerns around constitutional recognition, that being that it wouldn’t achieve anything practical. I’ve since reconsidered this. Symbolism does matter but it needs to be coupled with something real and tangible. Take, for example, the 2008 apology. Kevin Rudd’s words don’t mean much to me when we have more black kids than ever being taken from their homes. This is a fluff piece for white people to feel good about themselves without any implications for the real world, which is why it is appealing...”

Nayuka Gorrie
Young Aboriginal Activist

NAIDOC Committee
Voice Treaty Truth - were three key elements to the reforms set out in the [...] *Statement from the Heart.*

National NAIDOC Co-Chair Pat Thompson says that for generations, Indigenous Australians have sought recognition of their unique place in Australian history and society today.

“For generations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have looked for significant and lasting change. We need our fellow Australians to join us on this journey – to finish the unfinished business of this country.”

“The 2017 [...] *Statement from the Heart* built on generations of consultation and discussions among Indigenous people - we need to be the architects of our lives and futures,” she concluded.

National NAIDOC Committee
The theme also aims at highlighting our various First Nations’ desires for lasting and effective agreements such as Treaties - which cannot be achieved unless we have a shared, truthful understanding of the nature of the dispute, of the history, of how we got to where we stand.

*The AHO understands that the Traditional Owners do not wish for the Statement to be named after Uluru. This is where the Statement was made, but it is not limited to, or a reflection solely of this area.

“Treaty”
(courtesy of the Yothu Yindi website):

Well I heard it on the radio
And I saw it on the television
Back in 1988, all those talking politicians
Words are easy, words are cheap
Much cheaper than our priceless land
But promises can disappear
Just like writing in the sand

Treaty yeah treaty now treaty yeah treaty now

Nhima djatpangarri nhima walangwalang (You dance djatpangarri, that’s better)
Nhe djatpayatpa nhima gaya’ nhe marrtjini yakarray (You’re dancing, you improvise, you keep going, wow)
Nhe djatpa nhe walang gunurr jararrk gutjuk (You dance djatpangarri, that’s good my dear paternal grandson)

This land was never given up
This land was never bought and sold
The planting of the union jack
Never changed our law at all
Now two river run their course
Separated for so long
I’m dreaming of a brighter day
When the waters will be one

Treaty yeah, treaty now, treaty yeah, treaty now

Nhima gayakaya nhe gaya’ nhe (You improvise, you improvise)
Nhe gaya’ nhe marrtjini walangwalang nhe ya (You improvise, you keep going, you’re better)
Nhima djatpa nhe walang (You dance djatpangarri, that’s good)
Gumurr-djararrk yawirriny’ (My dear young men)
Nhe gaya’ nhe marrtjini gaya’ nhe marrtjini (You improvise, you keep improvising, you keep going)
Gayakaya nhe gaya’ nhe marrtjini walangwalang (Improvise, you improvise, you keep going, that’s better)
Nhima djatpa nhe walang (You dance djatpangarri, that’s good)
Gumurr-djararrk nhe yâ, e i, e i, e i i i, i i i i, i i i i i i i (You dear things)

Treaty ma’ (Treaty now)

Promises disappear - priceless land - destiny
Well I heard it on the radio
And I saw it on the television
But promises can be broken
Just like writing in the sand

Treaty yeah treaty now treaty yeah treaty now
Treaty yeah treaty now treaty yeah treaty now
Treaty yeah treaty ma treaty yeah treaty ma
Treaty yeah treaty ma treaty yeah treaty ma
The new $50 note rolled out in October last year, and we are just starting to find them creeping into our wallets. We realised that we actually do not know all that much about the people who grace this hideous yellow, yet very valuable currency. Therefore, we thought that everyone might like to know a little bit more about the Aboriginal man who now looks more cartoon like than in his previous portrait, and whose contributions are invaluable to Aboriginal history.

David Ngunaitponi (28th September 1872) is an Ngarrindjeri person, was born at the Point McLeay Mission, South Australia. 'Uniapon' is an Anglicisation of Ngunaitponi. His contribution to Australian society helped to break many Indigenous Australian stereotypes. These contributions are commemorated by using his image on the $50 note.

Beginning his education at the age of seven at the Point McLeay Mission School. After leaving school at 13, Unaipon worked as a servant in Adelaide, for Charles Burney Young, a landowner and successful winemaker, who fostered his interest in literature, philosophy, science and music. He read many books on science, studying mechanics and experimenting with perpetual motion, ballistics and polarised light.

From there he apprenticed to a bootmaker. However, Unaipon later found that because of his Aboriginality, employment opportunities were limited.

He then went onto take jobs as a storeman, bookkeeper, and preacher (again for the Point MacLeay mission). Upon retiring from preaching, continued working on his inventions into the 1960s.

Unaipon spent many years trying to create a perpetual motion machine, even into his 79th year. During his life, he took out provisional patents for a number of inventions. Some of his designs included an anti-gravitational device, a multi-radial wheel and a sheep-shearing handpiece, which is the basis of modern mechanical sheep shears. Unaipon did not receive any financial compensation or credit.

His other wild inventions included a centrifugal motor, a multi-radial wheel and a mechanical propulsion device, leading to his nickname “Australia’s Leonardo [da Vinci]”. He is also cited for his contributions to pre-World War I helicopter rotor designs based on the principle of the boomerang and his research into perpetual motion.
David Unaipon? Who is he?

Unaipon was the first published Aboriginal author, after the University of Adelaide commissioned him in the early 1920s to assemble a book on Aboriginal legends. Consequently, The David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education And Research at the University of South Australia is named after him. An annual Unaipon lecture in Adelaide was also established.

During the 1920s, Unaipon became the first Aboriginal person to be published in English, writing a variety of articles for the Sydney Daily Telegraph, and other news outlets. He also published three short booklets of Aboriginal stories and wrote on numerous topics from science to Aboriginal legends, and arguing for Aboriginal rights.

He travelled extensively through his work as a subscription collector for Aborigines' Friends' Association. He used the opportunity to engage with people as a preacher and lecturer for Aboriginal culture and equal rights. He became involved in political issues surrounding Aboriginal affairs and was an avid supporter of Aboriginal self-determination. Unaipon’s stance on Aboriginal issues sometimes put him into conflict with other Aboriginal leaders, however, due to his notoriety, he was accepted as his people’s spokesman.

In his old age, Unaipon returned to his birthplace, where he worked on inventions and continued his attempts at cracking perpetual motion.

Unaipon died in the Tailem Bend Hospital on 7 February 1967. He is buried in the Raukkan (formerly Point McLeay) Mission Cemetery.

In 1953, when he was 81, Unaipon received a Coronation medal celebrating the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1985, after his death, he was awarded the FAW Patricia Weickhardt Award for Aboriginal writers.

In 1988 The David Unaipon Literary Award was established as an annual award presented for the best of writing of the year by unpublished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors.

References:
http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/unaipon-david-8898
My name is Andy. I am a carpenter, and I have lived in Sydney all my life. I have a strong interest in archaeology from all around the world, particularly the older civilisations, the structures they created, and all the mysteries they have left behind.

I always enjoyed being in the bush, going on camping trips with family and friends, and bush walking.

About five years ago I started getting interested in Aboriginal culture when I visited some engraving sites here in Sydney. I quickly realised the significance of these places and how amazing it is that we are living among them today in our modern society. It really changed the way I view Sydney and Australia having grown up here knowing very little about the vast history, knowledge and traditions that have existed on this land for longer than any other culture in the world. The more I learn about Aboriginal culture and history the more interesting it gets.

Sadly, I learned that these sites will not be around forever as there are no people left with the knowledge to continue engraving them and carry on the past traditions. I found out about the Aboriginal Heritage Office and the role they play in protecting these special sites and have recently volunteered to monitor and look after one of them myself. I am very happy to be involved and to help with the important work that the AHO does.

Hopefully we can protect these sites and keep them in good condition for as long as possible, giving today’s people a chance to experience and learn from them before they fade away and are lost forever.

Hi, I am Catherine and I recently started volunteering at the Aboriginal Heritage Office to help with the museum. I love the variety in the role that can find me creating brochures for walks or having fun helping to construct a model of the fish traps at Brewarrina!

My background is mostly IT, which has seen me spend many enjoyable years in a few different industries in both the UK and Australia.

Despite loving having Europe on my doorstep, I recently returned to Australia late last year after 9 years to settle permanently back here to be closer to family but to also reconnect with our older history, culture and to our beautiful land here on a much deeper level. This includes connecting to Indigenous traditional plant medicine, healing, and appreciating their millennia-old wisdom and close, harmonious relationship to the land, nature, environment and beings. It also fascinates me to learn about the world’s other Indigenous peoples’ healing knowledge and spiritual connection to the earth, including the Native North and South Americans, Hawaiians and Pacific Islands.
Monday 12 August
Karen will be Speaking at Strathfield Community Centre and sharing her knowledge about Aboriginal Heritage and Council with the participants
Contact Strathfield Council: council@strathfield.nsw.gov.au

Tuesday 13 August
Karen will be conducting a Guided Walk for Willoughby Council at Explosive Reserve and sharing her knowledge about Aboriginal Heritage and Council with the participants
Contact Willoughby Council: email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Thursday 15 August
Karen will be giving a presentation at Strathfield Community Centre and sharing her knowledge about Aboriginal Heritage and Council with the participants
Contact Strathfield Council: council@strathfield.nsw.gov.au

It has been reported that the hand prints found recently in the Blue Mountains may be fake. The find came about when the rail service went to remove a large stone boulder that was about to fall over the rail line. Workers did the right thing, and stopped work when the discovery was made, holding up trains running for several days. Now, newspapers have reported that a non-Indigenous man created the artwork 50 years ago with his brother. This was discovered after the man wrote a letter to Traditional Owners explaining how he and his brother had made the art. For more information about the full story visit:

'Aboriginal rock art' found in Blue Mountains reported to be fake

Blue Mountains handprints could be fake

'Culturally significant' Glenbrook hand prints in cave found to be fake
One of the ongoing tasks of the Aboriginal Heritage Office is to find previously recorded sites that still have not been relocated. They are usually site cards from the 1970s or 80s when maps and coordinates were less detailed (see article Location, Location, Location! (Issue 3 October 2015) for background into the history of site recording).

Recently we had the opportunity to try and ‘once and for all’ verify a whole shoreline of sites. With digital cameras and GPS even on your phones, how could we possibly fail?

And yet we did.

The original site cards from 1984 were recorded by a consultant archaeologist. On this particular shore (we won’t give you the specific details as they are confidential) 9 sites were recorded in one stretch. All shell middens, some quite long and wide, some quiet small. There is a nice report with a nice map, some nice site descriptions and even some nice but slightly fuzzy photographs (photocopies in black and white). Relocating sites doesn’t usually get this orderly. What could go wrong?

Let’s throw in a few unruly influences.

There is a site card of a midden on the same shoreline by a different archaeologist a decade earlier that is not acknowledged in the site map

Another archaeologist doing research a few years later produced another map with all of the registered sites, which don’t quite match

The original recordings give each site a unique and contiguous site name and number. The NSW Sites Register (AHIMS) register coordinates for the sites are not orderly in line with the original map and not all appear to be there. The AHO Council numbers for all sites in each local council for this area are in the order of the AHIMS numbers (so are an almost random set of numbers)

Enter the first AHO team to try and relocate the sites. 2001, using photocopied site cards from AHIMS (in the days when you would have to go to Hurstville and do the photocopying yourself), 1:25,000 scale maps, a UBD (at 1:20,000 scale), a somewhat erratic GPS and a decent but fixed focal length digital camera, each shell midden and shelter was searched for. Some were quite easy and what was found on the ground matched the site card information. Others were not so clear. From the AHO digital site card, the 2001 entry includes:

“I have recorded this midden site as one long one including [additional site] or this description may be that site and vice versa…”

In 2003 another attempt was made to relocate any missing sites. It was found some site cards weren’t obtained because AHIMS had them mapped in the water (and therefore weren’t included in the council boundary search area). Even with all the sites and maps and old and not so old site plans and sketches and photos it was still confusing.
It was still maps and UBDs and it seemed the faraway Gulf War was somehow playing havoc with the GPS signal. In an attempt to better understand what was being found with what was recorded, a mud map of the shore was produced.

Again, some things matched up quite well, but others didn’t. The 2003 AHO site card states: “2001 photos doesn’t match description.”

Despite a few individual site reviews and visits in subsequent years, there wasn’t an opportunity to do the entire shore until early 2018. The entry for one of the problematic sites:

“The sketch plan on this card [from 2001] was for another site. This has confused things. Has been removed. There is a 2001 photo that matches the 2018 photo but not the original 2001 entry.”

Another AHO team went out with all the latest equipment and site cards late in 2018 as part of the coastal erosion project.

“Original coordinates lead nowhere, no sign of any midden/site. Coordinates recorded on [other site] lead to a site that matched the 2001 photos for [this site]. Updated coordinates have been recorded on this site card”.

Another desk top review using all the latest photos and comparing everything since 2001 with the original 1984 report seemed almost to crack it, then one image didn’t fit and it all came down again.

Is there a final result?

It seems that two original sites are no longer visible on the shoreline. They have probably eroded away. However, in at least one location there is shell midden visible that was not previously recorded. So we have two site cards with no physical evidence and one shell midden with no designated photo, but a number of site cards with photos and sketches that aren’t quite matching. It will take another slow survey of this shoreline to, hopefully, finally give each shell midden a properly aligned site card.

Unfortunately for shell middens across the region, many of them are continuing to suffer coastal erosion and are at varying speeds being lost to the tides and waves. That’s a story for another newsletter.
We recently learned of a new streaming service. Kanopy is a free access site, that allows you to watch movies using your library card!

Simply go the website below, create an account using your library details, and start watching!

https://www.kanopy.com/

Kanopy has a large collection of Indigenous Australian films and documentaries for you to enjoy!

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Book Recommendation!

The book won this year’s NSW Premier’s Literary Award Book of the Year and the Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-fiction.

Book Review by Phil Hunt:

This is a treasure of Australian archaeological history. For the archaeological student or anyone interested in Aboriginal Australia from this perspective, it provides a three-dimensional guided walk into the characters, the burning curiosities and the political battles of Australian archaeology. How did the profession of archaeology focussing on Aboriginal heritage start in Australia? How did we learn that Aboriginal people didn’t just ‘wash up’ on the shores of this continent a few thousand years ago? How do we know that Aboriginal peoples have been adapting to the harsh desert interior or the frozen mountains of Tasmania even throughout the last glacial period? Read this book and you’ll find out. You’ll also see how the archaeological community stumbled in its attempts to appreciate how Aboriginal people felt as their heritage was dug up and investigated and also how archaeologist have sometimes been important champions of the First Australians and helping Aboriginal people access a wider audience.

For me personally, it is a fresh look at people who were my lecturers and mentors or whose papers and research I read and examined. It is a reminder of the good and the bad. Archaeology in Australia is still young, as is the modern society that we call Australia. Archaeology is a tool with which to search for answers, but as a science it is bound by those fundamental principles whereby we should not see the answers or facts as absolutes. The samples are still small and theories are still theories awaiting new data to refute or improve them. The book provides Aboriginal perspectives and voices but it is overall another non-Aboriginal story about Aboriginal Australia. This is not a criticism of the book but of our situation. Most stories of Aboriginal Australia are still by the discoverers, not by those who are discovered. If you read this book, you will gain a greater appreciation of why archaeology is still relevant today, when it is supporting Aboriginal peoples’ custodianship of these special lands.

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Rainy days must have you thinking, "can’t go out to monitor my site?"

The AHO has you covered!

Last month’s Crossword answers

Across

Down
Did you know?

Warra warra (go away, go away) was reportedly the first Indigenous word spoken to the English colonists by the inhabitants of southeastern Australia.


Across

2. ____ or Ceremonial Grounds are places where ceremonies take place (4).

4. The Aboriginal flag is made up of three colours, red, ____ and black (6).

7. ____ Traps were used to trap fish during high tides, so that they could be easily caught during low tides (4).

10. Aboriginal ____ usually occur in soft or sandy areas, in middens, or even involve cremation (7).

13. The best time to view ____ sites is in the early morning or after rain (9).

15. The ____ and Pleistocene are the two geological time periods of importance to Aboriginal archaeology (8).

16. Shell middens contain organic materials used for ____ dating (5-6).

17. ____ Radio 93.7FM is Sydney’s only Indigenous Radio (5).

18. ____ trees show where the bark was removed to make coolamons, boomerangs, or canoes (7).

Down

1. Water ____ were used as a potential source of fresh water, and to sharpen tools (5).

3. Engravings are found predominately on ____ sandstone outcrops (10).

5. Lane Cove River was called ______ by the Aboriginal people (11).

6. Two sticks that are hit together to make music are called ____ sticks (8).

8. ____ and Yemmerrawanne travelled to England with Governor Phillip in 1792 (9).

9. The ____ Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 is the main legislation for Aboriginal heritage in NSW (8).

11. Pleiades or The ____ Sisters is a constellation that has a story for several language groups around Australia (5).

12. A single artefact is called an ____ find by archaeologists (8).

14. Women fished from ____ with fishing lines (6).
Blue Gum Walking Track

The Cammeraygal people once called Blue Gum Creek home, and their presence remains through Aboriginal rock art and middens. Still living here are frogs, Powerful Owls, Long-Finned Eels, bats, bandicoots, and 64 species of birds.

Enjoy a stroll along one of two walking tracks, starting at either Dulwich Avenue or from the north end of Greville Street.

**Track length:** Approximately a 5km return trip.

**Track grade:** Medium - on unsealed bush tracks with steep steps in sections. Sturdy shoes required.

**Note:** This is a Level 2 Wildlife Protection Area. Residents may walk dogs on a leash.

For more information, visit the Willoughby Council Website!

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Did you know?

Powerful Owls are opportunistic predators that hunt arboreal mammals, including the greater glider, ringtail possums, brushtail possums, koala, sugar glider and feathertail gliders.

The Xanthorrhoea (grass tree) grow on average 2-1/2cm per year. This means a 5 metre tall tree may be anywhere between 200 & 600 years old, depending on the species.

Take time to reflect on this on the next page, and wonder at the fact that we may be seeing the exact same plants as our ancestors!