



# BOAB BULLETIN

No. 118

October 2013

## NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

The Palms Community Centre, corner Nicholson and Rokeby roads, Subiaco

Wednesday, 2 October 2013

**Peter Veth (Centre for Rock Art Research, UWA)**

**“Recent archaeology research in the Kimberley”**

Wednesday, 6 November 2013

**Barry Smith (Word Spinner)**

**“Kimberley Trilogy; stories from a novelist and historian”**

Wednesday, 4 December 2013

**Kevin Kenneally (Botanist)**

**“Exploration and Botany: The W R Easton 1921 Expedition”**

Please note that, with many of our speakers involved in work-related travel, this program may change at short notice. Should a speaker not be available, we try to find a substitute with a similar topic.

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meetings.  
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

11 Oct 2013	Smokefree WA Derby Freshfest
18 Oct 2013	Environs Kimberley Broome Full Moon Beach Walk
19, 20 & 21 Oct 2013	Staircase to the Moon, Broome
21 to 24 Nov 2013	Mango Festival, Broome
5 Dec 2013	Chinatown Christmas Street Party, Broome
16 to 25 May 2014	14th annual Argyle Diamonds Ord Valley Muster
24 May 2014	Airnorth Kimberley Moon Experience
5 to 14 Sep 2014	Shinju Matsuri ‘Festival of the Pearl’

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since accepting the responsibility of Kimberley Society President I have realised that although the Society has existed for many years there are many people and organisations with vested interests in the Kimberley region that have not heard of us. Further I have become more aware of the many celebrations, developments and interests associated with the region. The last *Boab Bulletin* provided information on NAIDOC with its award winners and public activities. Since that edition I have endeavoured to promote the Society by networking and attending seminars. Aligned with this philosophy I attended two public seminars representing the Kimberley Society and connected the Society with the Small Business Development Corporation in Kununurra. Read on in the *Bulletin* for summaries of the seminars.

The Kununurra Small Business Development Corporation provided the winners of the Kimberley Development Commission Small Business Awards 2013 that were hosted in Kununurra. The relevant categories and winners were:

- Home Based Business: Kimberley Cruise Centre, Kununurra;
- Micro Business: North West Hydro Solutions, Broome;
- Business with 5-10 Employees: Kimberley Mechanical Tilt & Tray Service, Kununurra;
- Business with 11-20 Employees: Bali Hai Resort, Broome;
- Best Franchisee: Tarunda IGA, Fitzroy Crossing;
- Best Aboriginal Business: Crosscountry Contractors, Wyndham;
- Best Small Business Achiever Award: North West Regional Airlines, Halls Creek/Wyndham; and,
- Overall Winner: Kimberley Mechanical Tilt & Tray Service, Kununurra.

Prior to the Kimberley Awards the regional centres of Broome, Derby and Kununurra also had their award winners. Members interested in knowing the local businesses that were recognised for their achievements will find the results on the internet.

I hope you are enjoying your Kimberley Society membership and encourage you to enlighten others who may be interested in attending our monthly meetings and/or joining the Society to keep informed on what is transpiring in the Kimberley region.

*Jeff Murray*

## ORD RIVER DIVERSION DAM 1963–2013

On 20 July 2013, fifty years to the day since Prime Minister Robert Menzies formally opened the Ord River Irrigation Project, a double celebration was held at Swim Beach near the Ord River Diversion Dam. Dignitaries and guests celebrated the anniversary, and Engineering Heritage WA, the heritage arm of Engineers Australia's WA division, presented the Water Corporation with an Engineering Heritage Marker to recognise the engineering heritage significance of the dam.

The guests at the ceremony included Kimberley Society members **Don Young**, **John Lewis**, **Peter Knight**, and **WAC (Bill) Wright**. Don (as Past Chairman of Engineering Heritage Australia) was involved in preparing the successful nomination for the Engineering Heritage Marker. John (as the Public Works Dept Engineer for Planning and Design, Hydraulics Section, from 1954 to 1964) led the project design team. Peter's September 2009 talk on the dam is on our website, and [Bill's slides](#) of the era can be viewed on the Kununurra Historical Society's website. If you wish to peruse the commemorative booklet received by the guests at the celebration, click [here](#).

## THE KIMBERLEY COASTLINE, SCULPTED BY MEGA-TSUNAMIS

On 5 June 2013, our speaker was **Dr Phillip Playford AM** who has worked for both Federal and Western Australian governments as well as the petroleum-exploration industry. He is a former Director of the Geological Survey of WA, and his principal geological research has been in the Canning and Perth Basin areas as well as the Shark Bay area.

Phillip Playford's interest in mega-tsunamis started during a 1977 geological survey that passed by Legendre Island near Dampier in the Pilbara region. He first noticed the tsunami deposits on this island, the only limestone island in the archipelago.

To give a better understanding of the scale of these boulder deposits and at times the distance from the shoreline, Phillip showed a number of photographs. Some were taken from ground level with colleagues standing alongside to demonstrate the size of the boulders. Others were taken from the air to give some perspective to the distance the boulders had been pushed inland.

Boulder deposits attributed to tsunamis occur at many places along the Kimberley coast, and are thought to have been partly responsible for the intensely jagged nature of that coast. Good examples of such deposits are known at Cape Domett (at the mouth of Cambridge Gulf), West Cape Bougainville and Walmesly Bay (either side of Admiralty Gulf), Lamarck Island (in York Sound), Camden Harbour, and Raft Point.

Comparable tsunami deposits, in the form of huge blocks of limestone lying on flat karstified surfaces, are known from behind coastal cliffs on Dirk Hartog, Dorre, Bernier, and Koks Islands in Shark Bay, Point Quobba on the mainland beside Shark Bay, and Barrow Island and Legendre Island off the Pilbara coast. These mega-tsunami deposits are among the largest known in the world. Some of the boulders that they contain weigh more than 700 tonnes. The boulder deposits at Legendre Island have been reliably radiocarbon dated as about 3,000 years before present.

The origin of the mega-tsunamis is unknown. Each has conceivably been initiated by subduction faulting off the Indonesian Archipelago, an asteroid striking the Indian Ocean, massive slumping of sediments on the continental slope, abrupt movement along faults off the WA coast, or underwater volcanic activity.

These mega-tsunamis were catastrophic events that are likely to have resulted in the deaths of thousands of Aborigines then living in the coastal areas. Aboriginal tradition tells how about 300 people died, and only two survived, when a huge wave (tsunami) passed over the Montgomery Islands, off the West Kimberley, during the early 20th century. If mega-tsunamis, comparable with those that struck the Kimberley, Pilbara, and Shark Bay coasts during the recent past, were to be repeated today, they would have major impacts on communities, towns, and industries in the coastal areas involved.

*Susan Clarkson*

## SCIENCE IN THE KIMBERLEY

Kimberley Society member **Geoff Vivian** provides interesting coverage on the Kimberley and on other topics for [ScienceNetwork WA](#). Articles published in the past few months include: 'Mistletoe vulnerability underlined in review', 'Study questions rock art style shift', 'Experts re-assess Kimberley wallaby numbers', 'Sugarbag bees set to reveal their habits in Broome', 'Genetic technique tracks endemic insects in the Kimberley', 'Indigenous knowledge offered for climate change adaptation', 'Food web tracked in Roebuck Bay algal bloom' and 'Digital technology resurrects ancient rock art'.

## CELEBRATING MOWANJUM'S FUTURE

During Friday 9 August, Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th, the All Saints Floreat Uniting Church commemorated the centennial of their relationship with the Mowanjum Aboriginal community. Mowanjum, which incorporates the Worrorra, Ngarinyin, and Wunumbal language groups, is located about 10 kilometres south east of Derby in the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley. The community was established as a mission of the Presbyterian Church in the late 1950s, in a continuation of missionary work that began at Port George IV in 1912. The most recent living area was established in the mid-1970s, following government requirements for additional land for the Derby Airport. Preserving both its European and Indigenous history, Mowanjum has maintained strong links to traditional country.

The seminar explored a range of issues for Aboriginal people and their communities, and the church's relationship with them. Over the three days key speakers presented issues which impact Aboriginal communities in Australia, including juvenile justice, education, and the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children. The talks also included elders and young members of the Mowanjum community who spoke on their own experiences in the community. Accompanying the seminar was a photographic display of Mowanjum, its history and culture.

On Friday night the seminar commenced with a 'Welcome to Country' accompanied by music. The Saturday included a keynote address on the significance of a modified preamble for the Australian Constitution. "Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution is an important step towards an inclusive Australian society", Reconciliation Australia, Director and Desert Knowledge Australia, Chair, Hon. Fred Chaney AO told the audience. Mr Chaney continued by saying that he wanted government to do a good job for Aboriginal Australians and to ensure they are recognised in the constitution.



Rev. Andrew Watts with senior Ngarinyin artist Alison Burgu, who is known for her Wandjina images and has been exhibiting her art since the 1980s.

Throughout Saturday the presenters included Hon. Peter Collier, Minister for Education, Aboriginal Affairs and Electoral Affairs in Western Australia; Paul Bridge, Principle of Derby District High School, on education opportunities for Aboriginal children; Rev. Andrew Watts, past Frontier Services Minister of the Uniting Church in Derby on lessons for the future; Assoc. Prof. Dawn Bessarab, Senior Aboriginal Health Researcher at Curtin University on holistic wellbeing of Aboriginal children; Tammy Solinec, Director of the National Congress of Australia's First peoples, member of the Law Society of WA's Aboriginal Lawyers Committee, and National NAIDOC Committee on the value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia; Rev. Dr Robert Hoskins, retired Minister of the United Church on the story of Mowanjum; and Mowanjum community members on the dreams for the future of children of the West Kimberley.



Assoc. Prof. Dawn Bessarab, BSW (Hons), PhD (Curtin)  
Indigenous Health Researcher

The events concluded on Sunday morning with a Mowanjum celebratory church service.

Although many presentations portrayed hopes for the future of the Mowanjum community and its people, there was a strong message of problems and despair. Just 10 minutes drive from Derby there were six deaths by suicide in six months at Mowanjum last year. Gary Umbagai, council chairman, despaired about the rising death toll and community dysfunction. Regularly community members were being admitted to the Derby hospital, for self-harm, attempted hanging, overdosing and suicidal thoughts.

On the positive side, the gathering of guest speakers shared many stories relating to progressive developments that are improving the culture and wellbeing of the Worrorra, Ngaringin, and Wunumbal peoples. These three language groups who form this community continue to relate to their lands and practice their unique culture. Also, the relationship of the church with the community of Mowanjum is distinctive and has been substantial for many years.

*Jeff Murray*

## REST IN PEACE

The August 2013 *Boab Bulletin* carried a brief obituary for the late **Professor Mike Morwood**. On 19 September, the *West Australian* carried a much more extensive obituary, accompanied by a photograph. Titled 'Counter evolutionary' and published on page 19, it complemented others published around the world. Examples can be seen on websites that include *The Guardian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

## 32 YEARS OF TRAVELLING THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE

On 7 August 2013, after listening to **Eric Gard** speak at our meeting, I had the pleasure of having him sign my copy of *Canning Stock Route: A Traveller's Guide for a Journey Through History*. He and his wife Ronele wrote that book, and Eric's talk brought back many memories.

Eric is currently enjoying retirement after a career that included working as a pilot with the R.A.N., and then in Canada before returning to Australia in 1975 and joining an oil company. Since 1980, he and Ronele have travelled the Canning Stock Route more than 40 times.

Eric's talk was a wonderful blend of geography, botany and history. He mentioned the original establishment of the route by Alfred Canning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and his refurbishment of it in 1930–31, after another contractor proved unsuccessful. Even at this latter stage Canning was still active with his own surveying business.

One reason I was so taken with Eric's talk was that I was lucky enough to go down the stock route in August 1991 with Halls Creek and Bungle Bungle Tours and also in the company of Len Hill. Len had gone up and down the stock route as a 19-year-old in 1946 with Ben Taylor, a drover. As it happened, someone had a copy of the Gards' recently published book. At each well we read it and it was almost a station of the cross. The trip was made all the more memorable with Len's reminiscences of episodes that had happened on the cattle drive. He said going down they saw lots of "smokes" from Aboriginal people who were still living and travelling around the stock route. At the southern end of the stock route we met a lady from one of the stations. Len hadn't seen her or her husband for over 40 years, yet they remembered each other. Such is the pastoral industry. I distinctly remember this woman who was well into her 80's being unable to get out of the 4 wheel drive as her Dermatologist had told her to avoid any sun exposure as she was prone to skin cancers.

Another thing I remember was Len Hill pointing that out the tracks of the cattle were still visible. We saw quite a lot of camels and every day there was evidence of camel tracks or the occasional skeleton. I think our weapon of choice for disposing of bull camels was a Magnum, which was licensed to the manager of the tour company who was also a stock agent. Not the .44 made famous by Clint Eastwood in the Dirty Harry movies but still pretty impressive! There were lots of flat tyres, and one shock absorber replaced. The company was exceedingly well prepared. So much so that on about our 10<sup>th</sup> night of the trip near Marble Bar our meal consisted of freshwater cobbler from Lake Argyle. It was a great tour and, going by the anecdotes Eric shared with us, probably comparable to some of his tag along trips.

The Gards really own the Canning Stock Route. Since 1980, they have been up it as many times as cattle drives down the stock route. They have put more into the stock route with signage, deemed necessary after the tragic loss of the teenage jackaroos Simon Amos and James Annetts in 1986. Unfortunately over 90% of the signage has been souvenired. They also helped install a two story toilet which was later burnt down. It has since been replaced. Eric said at the end of the talk he felt he had one more trip left in him with some mutual friends but he felt Ronele may have a different idea!

The slides were excellent and included some of the desert blooming after big rains from the monsoons. Others showed wells, campsites and graves. I learned that the desert oak is the second hardest timber known but, even so, rails made to surround graves along the stock route will eventually rot away because of the exposure to the extremes in weather. Also, Savory Creek, near which I had camped, is apparently

twice as saline as the Dead Sea. Eric says that his wife likes to bathe in it but it's not to his liking.

He also had some very cautionary tips about the Canning Stock Route.

1. You should never travel alone, and there should always be a backup vehicle.
2. A spare set of shock absorbers for the front is always advisable.
3. After-market shock absorbers will usually fail on a Canning trip especially with the horrendous corrugations that are now present with a height of 10cm and about a metre between them.
4. Petrol vehicles are not suited to the stock route, and there are some 14 or 15 burnt out petrol vehicles along it. This is related to the fact that Spinifex builds up beneath the vehicles and the radiators and, with modern catalytic converters reaching a temperature of 800° centigrade, a fire is almost inevitable. Aluminium cars such as the Range Rovers burnt very well once alight.
5. Mercedes Benz vehicles on a recent trip all suffered severely.
6. Radios are a must for communication between the various groups travelling there.
7. Driving on salt pans or salt lakes such as Aerodrome Lake is very risky because vehicles can break through the crust and become seriously bogged.

At least 33 deaths have occurred along the stock route and Eric mentioned a group of about 11 people who died going out to Punmu in January 1991. Unfortunately a child who had been one of my patients was amongst that group.

There are certainly some interesting characters met coming down the Stock Route. Eric mentioned a couple in their 80s with a converted Cowleys Pie Cart from Adelaide. They were travelling by themselves. For those of you who have never been to Adelaide and seen the Pie Carts at the Town Hall or Victoria Square or up on the Norwood Parade they dispense pies, often in a thick pea soup, called a pie floater. There was also a gentleman with two camels who had gone up the coast of Western Australia and who was going down the Stock Route on his way to Esperance and then perhaps across the Nullarbor Plain. He carried a large rifle to protect his camels against bull camels in heat.

We also heard about other stock routes, and that Eric had recommended to the appropriate government authority that the Canning Stock Route, the Peak Hill Stock Route and the Bedford Stock Route be preserved. That was in response to a move to close old stock routes. The Bedford Stock Route, of which I was unaware, stretches from Fossil Downs to Wyndham and would be a wonderful trip especially if one can take time to find many of the gorges that are hidden along the way and not mentioned in any popular travel guide.

Lastly Eric mentioned that the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *Canning Stock Route* book is virtually sold out. There are a few copies left in Perth at the Pit Stop Book Shop and some other map shops which I can't remember.

*Jack Vercoe*

## **BINGHI**

In the August edition of the *Boab Bulletin*, the seldom-seen term 'binghi' appeared in the feature article titled 'My Cockatoo Island Holiday (November / December 1939)' by the late Ruth Rowell. While heard more frequently in the eastern states than in the Kimberley in that era, the term was also used around Broome with reference to Aboriginal people. It was not considered derogatory at the time but could be seen as such now. The earliest known Kimberley use was in 1892 when Joseph Bradshaw applied it to Aboriginal people on his Maragui Station on the Prince Regent River.

## KIMBERLEY SOCIETY INC

### Draft Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting

Held at The Palms Community Centre on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2013

#### Opening:

The meeting, attended by 30 members and 6 visitors, was opened by the President, Jeff Gresham, at 7.40 pm.

#### Apologies:

Ken Ahmat, Audrey Bolger, Jim & Norma Anderson, Roger Passmore

#### Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting:

The minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday 7th March 2012 were confirmed as circulated (in the Boab Bulletin) and the President was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

Moved: Mike Cusack

Seconded: Hamish McGlashan

APPROVED

#### Matters Arising:

Nil

#### President's Report:

I am pleased to present my third annual report as President of the Kimberley Society for the 2012-2013 year. The year was significant in that it saw the publication of *"Kimberley History: People, Exploration and Development"*, the proceedings volume from the successful history seminar held by the Society in 2010. This book is the third significant publication by the Society following the two earlier publications on Kimberley rock art. The book includes papers by all of those who made presentations at the seminar and is a profusely illustrated 240page volume. Editing, design and printing costs totalled just over \$29 000 and the decision was taken to print 2000 copies. In early May 2013 2057 copies were delivered to the warehouse which was good timing as it afforded the opportunity to have the book available for the 2012 tourist season. The book was sold to Society members for \$35 a copy and the recommended retail price was \$49.95 per copy. The book has been very well received and generated much positive comment. It has sold very well, particularly from outlets in the Kimberley. As at the end of 2012, more than half of the printed copies have been sold or distributed and receipts and invoices from sales total \$29 670.75. This means the full cost of producing the book has already been recovered and all subsequent sales will result in further revenue for the Society. The book has been a positive outcome for the Society and its members.

The revenue from sales of the new history book together with continued sales of the rock art book, all copies of which have now been sold, has placed the Society in a very strong financial position as is outlined in the Treasurer's Report. Cash in the bank totals over \$50 000 and we will be looking to utilise some of these funds in 2013-14 to further the objectives of the Society. During 2012-13 the Society was pleased to provide a grant of \$5000 to the designer and printer of Mike Donaldson's Volume 3 of his splendid *Kimberley Rock Art* series.

Our monthly meetings continue to be well attended and I would again like to thank Jeff Murray for his work in organising speakers to provide a varied and interesting program. The Society assisted financially to bring Dr Mark Moore to Perth from the University of New England in Armidale to present his interesting talk, and demonstration, on stone tool manufacture. Another interesting program has already been developed for 2013 and this year the Society will cover the travel costs of Dr Kim Akerman who will be talking to us in August. We will continue to strive to provide a varied and interesting program of talks for our members. Despite already having a full program for 2013 we would welcome suggestions from members regarding potential speakers and/or subjects. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those people who have assisted with the setting up of the meeting venues and helping with the distribution of suppers.

We are seeing an increasing number of queries through our website. This is pleasing and reflects the increasing interest in, and recognition of the importance of the Kimberley region of Western Australia. At the initiative of Cathie Clement a significant addition has been made

to the website by including a section on book reviews and notes on various books about diverse aspects of the Kimberley that have appeared in the *Boab Bulletin*. This is a “work in progress” but represents an important information source for those interested in the region. There is an urgent need to continue to improve the website and ensure that information on the talks given at monthly meetings finds its way onto the website.

As another initiative we have made a further, if somewhat tentative step, into the digital age by providing some of our members a digital copy of the *Boab Bulletin*. We would hope that eventually the majority of our members would prefer to receive the *Boab Bulletin* in digital format.

As this is my last President’s report I would like to acknowledge the support of Council during my 3 year term. This year we see the departure of long term Council members, Hamish McGlashan, Gilbert Marsh and Sue Clarkson. All three have played valuable and important roles over the years and of course Hamish was President for the 3 years prior to my term.

Lastly but by no means least I would like to thank my wife, Elizabeth, who has supported me in this role during the past 3 years and has co-ordinated the supper preparation for the monthly meetings.

In conclusion I would thank all the members for their continued support and interest. I am confident the Society will continue to flourish as more people become aware of this most fascinating region of our nation.

Jeffrey J Gresham  
President

### **Treasurer’s Report:**

#### **Bank Accounts**

Our finances remain in a very healthy condition mainly due to Rock Art and History book sales and bank interest from the funds accumulated from that source.

Our total assets amount to some \$83,000 comprised of \$53,000 in our bank accounts, \$9,977.80 in outstanding payments for invoiced books, \$384.00 of stock in hand at cost for Rock Art Books and \$13,691.22 in hand for Kimberley History Books at cost. The value of equipment is approximately \$2,500

Our total liabilities amount to \$30,052 including about \$2,181.78 in advanced subscriptions , sundry creditors of \$572.50 and GST of \$298.46.

Moved: Jack Vercoe                      Seconded: Elizabeth Gresham                      APPROVED

#### **Election of Office Bearers:**

The President advised that the following nominations for Office Bearers had been received:

President:	Jeff Murray
Vice President:	Jack Vercoe, Mike Cusack
Treasurer:	Jeff Gresham
Secretary:	Frank Woodmore
Membership Secretary:	Mike Donaldson
Councillors:	Ken Ahmat, Audrey Bolger, Roger Passmore, Geoff Owen

There being no other nominations all nominations were endorsed.

Moved: Susan Clarkson                      Seconded: Hamish McGlashan                      APPROVED

#### **Other Business:**

Nil

#### **Closure:**

There being no other business the President closed the meeting at 8.00 pm

Signed as a true record.

This                      day of                                      2013

Jeff Murray - President

**KIMBERLEY SOCIETY  
INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2012**

**INCOME**

Subscriptions	\$ 5,034.12	
Rock Art Book sales (profit)	6303.14	
Kimberley History book sales (profit)	35,586.95	
Raffle takings	1058.19	
Postage recovered	291.92	
Donations	25.00	
Bank Interest	2.93	
 Total Income		 \$48,302.25

**EXPENDITURE**

Newsletter	\$ 3710.19	
Office Supplies	84.90	
Website	438.00	
Brochures	660.00	
Speaker costs	1093.89	
Supper costs	674.55	
Raffle Prizes	586.37	
Accounting & Audit Fees	520.00	
PO Box	206.36	
Hall Hire	356.30	
Insurances	651.46	
Kimberley History Book Launch	148.55	
Packaging & posting Rock art Books	383.48	
Packaging & posting Kimberley History	2436.95	
Cost of Kimberley History (transfer ex stock)	12975.44	
Cost of Rock Art Books (transfer ex stock)	3042.00	
Bank Charges	4.09	
Depreciation	416.46	
Miscellaneous	67.10	
 Total expenditure		 \$28,455.63

**ASSETS & LIABILITIES  
DEC 2012**

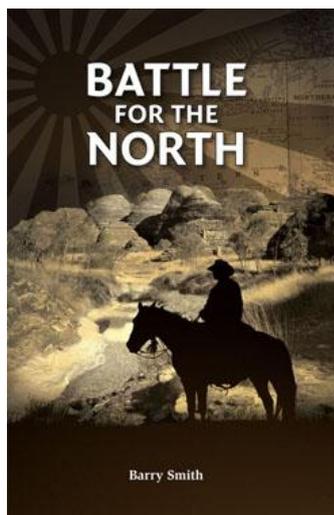
**ASSETS**

Cheque a/c No 1	\$45,968.62	
Cheque a/c No 2	\$ 7112.77	
Trade Debtors	\$ 9977.80	
<b>Stock</b>		
Rock Art Book @ cost	\$ 384.00	
Kimberley History Book @ cost	\$13,691.22	
<b>Residual value of Equipment</b>		
PA system	\$ 00	
Projector	\$ 756.31	
Laptop	\$ 1101.64	
 Total Assets		 \$79,388.36

**LIABILITIES**

Sundry creditors	\$ 572.50	
Advanced Subscriptions	\$ 2181.78	
GST	\$ 298.46	
 Total Liabilities		 \$ 3052.74

## BOOK NOTE

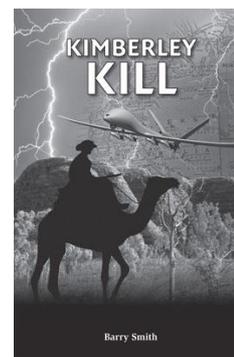
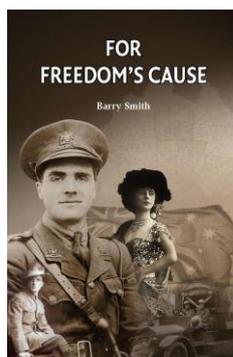


***Battle For The North* by Barry Smith, self published, [Ringwood, Vic.], 2012. Paperback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9780987177933, RRP \$20. Also in e-book at \$ 9.95.**

This book is volume 2 in the author's 'Kimberley Trilogy of Australian adventure novels which span the First, Second and, yet to come, Third World War'. The main character, Dan Bevan, is in the Kimberley after surviving the First World War—having served as a working-class English army officer from Manchester—and taking on the republican rebellion in Ireland. His wife Liza and son Daniel have roles in the book, as do their friends Lady Elspeth, Alice Elliott, and Alice's husband Charlie—a Melbourne barrister who met Dan while serving as a captain with the Australian Light Horse.

*Battle For The North* begins with the Japanese air raid on Broome on 3 March 1942. That event was real, as was the North Australia Observer Unit to which the author assigns Dan Bevan. The rest of the book is fiction. Here, Charlie Elliott leads the NAOU and issues instructions for Dan and his men to thwart Japanese commando attempts to establish a foothold on the northern Kimberley coast. The action alternates between the Kimberley and Darwin, where Liza, Alice and Lady Elspeth become enmeshed in their own war-related dramas. Daniel is there too, ready to take part in daring flights designed to assist his father to reclaim Kalumburu mission.

Palmer Higgs Books present excerpts, bibliographical details, and descriptions for each of the trilogy volumes on their [website](#). The price of volume 1 (*For Freedom's Cause*; 200 pages) is \$25 for the paperback or \$9.95 for the e-book edition. The price of volume 3 (*Kimberley Kill*; 128 pages) is \$20 for the paperback or \$9.95 for the e-book edition.



Barry Smith is currently in the Kimberley promoting his books. He reports regularly on his travels and the progress of his work his [website](#) and on [Facebook](#). He will be bringing copies of his first two books to our meeting of 6 November when he speaks on the topic 'Kimberley Trilogy; stories from a novelist and historian'. The third volume is unlikely to be back from the printer in time for the meeting. The books will be on sale, with single copies selling at the full retail price. A discount will be available if more than one book is purchased. The discounted prices will be \$40 for the first two novels (a saving of \$5) and \$55 for the trilogy (a saving of \$10). Anyone buying the trilogy or ordering volume 3 on its own will need to discuss delivery of volume 3 with Barry. Palmer Higgs Books has [a special package](#) for members who cannot attend the meeting. The package offers a \$5 discount, to offset the shipping fee. The time for which the special package will remain available has not been decided, so don't wait too long if you want the books.

*Cathie Clement*

## AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES ANNUAL LECTURE

The 2013 Australian Academy of the Humanities annual lecture – delivered by Professor Peter Hiscock FAHA at the University of Western Australia on Friday 9 August – was titled ‘Creators or Destroyers: The Burning Questions of Human Impact in Ancient Aboriginal Australia’. One question was: ‘Did Aboriginal people create an Eden-like estate or did they destroy the delicately balanced natural ecosystem they found in Australia?’ The talk critiqued some of the latest theories and discoveries to reveal the intellectual biases and analytical constraints that underpin these debates. It also argued that the magnitude of change that can be recognised in Aboriginal Australia prior to the arrival of Europeans challenges static and idealist stories of Australia’s human past.

Prof. Hiscock is the Tom Austen Brown Professor of Australian Archaeology at the University of Sydney. His research involves syntheses of Australian prehistory, studies of Palaeolithic transitions in Europe and Africa, creation of methods for inferring lithic artefact reduction, and studies of the public image of archaeology. He has written, edited, or contributed to three books and many papers, accessible through <http://usyd.academia.edu/PeterHiscock>. Of note is *Desert Peoples: Archaeological Perspectives* edited by Peter Veth (the Kimberley Society presenter for October), M. A. Smith and Peter Hiscock. Published by Blackwell, it examines the key concepts vital to understanding human adaptation to marginal landscapes, focusing on Australia but taking in Africa and the Americas too. It also looks at underpinning behavioural and belief systems, and it explores interactions between desert hunter-gatherers, herders, and pastoralists.

Among other things, the audience that filled the Webb Lecture Theatre at UWA heard that, by about 8,000 BC, people we now recognise as Aboriginal hunter-gatherers had colonized most, if not all, of the Australian environments. Peter mentioned that humans had arrived in Australia at least 40,000 years ago when a) the climate was substantially cooler and drier than it is today and b) the continental landmass was almost fifty percent greater due to exposure of the now-submerged continental shelf. By about 9,600 BC, climatic changes reversed those earlier trends. With the massive continental shelf of northern and southern Australia having become home to many Aboriginal groups, the associated rise in sea level obliged those people to adjust to sequential landscape changes. It also isolated some groups by creating geographical barriers. The archaeological evidence reveals such things and helps to answer questions about the human impact in ancient Aboriginal Australia.

Prof. Hiscock’s lecture will be published by the Australian Academy of the Humanities in *Humanities Australia*, Number 5, 2014. Enquiries on obtaining this publication and when it will be available can be directed to the [Australian Academy of the Humanities](http://www.aahumanities.org.au).

*Jeff Murray*

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