



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 84

February 2008.

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 6 February 2008

Pat Lowe

(Author, publisher and environmentalist)

“An evening with Pat Lowe: writing, publishing and nature in the Kimberley”

Wednesday, 5 March 2008

Emily Rohr (Short Street Gallery, Broome)

“Cultural Differences and their Impact on Art in the Kimberley”

Wednesday, 2 April 2008

Dr Philip Playford (geologist and rock art enthusiast)

“Aboriginal art and culture in the Kimberley and adjoining areas: a historical perspective”

May 7th Mary Ann Jebb (Historian) — “Kimberley histories told through Boab nut carving”

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I always enjoy Nicholas Rothwell's articles in the *Weekend Australian*; think of that wonderfully penetrating obituary for Grahame Walsh. Recently in a summary of a lecture, he mused on the landscape of Australia. At times historical, philosophical or romantic, he made the point that even in our remotest deserts there is archaeological evidence of human habitation: indeed the deserts themselves may be a result of past human activity.

The Kimberley is often portrayed as a pristine wilderness, one of the last remaining in the world. (My *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* gives a definition "a wild or uncultivated tract of land, uninhabited or inhabited only by wild animals"). But the Kimberley has never been thus; look under any rock shelter and the rock art will proclaim eons of human habitation. Only in the past seventy or so years has it become comparatively deserted and the cattle, donkeys and other feral species have continued to alter the landscape. A number of agencies are attempting to change things back to the times before European settlement and others, no doubt from the best of motives, seek to limit or even prevent access to large tracts of the region.

Which brings me to the meeting in the Alexander Library in December which was organised by various conservation societies. It was called to consider the implications of on-shore gas facilities from the extensive reserves in the Browse Basin. At the beginning we were told that "we stopped the Ningaloo Reef development so we can stop this too". Indeed there were some who opposed any facility at all including an eloquent young Aboriginal man, Albert Wiggins from One Arm Point, and some others whose rhetoric was stronger than their reason. However, most of the authoritative speakers recognised the inevitability of the exploitation of the resource and concentrated particularly on the appropriate siting of (preferably) a single hub. The vulnerability of the offshore islands was a particular consideration. Norm McKenzie's talk to our society in November was particularly apposite. I expect that some of our speakers later in the year will be returning to the topic.

On a lighter note, the festive season is one for reunions. A notice appears elsewhere in this newsletter for the usual Derby one in Kings Park. One of the most enjoyable is the annual Derby DAGA Day golf competition, open to all who have played with the scroungers in Derby. In this keen contest I have to report that (again) your President was successful, though this was due almost entirely to the skill and generous handicap allotted to his partner of the day. May you all have an equally happy and successful year.

Hamish McGlashan

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Congratulations to Kimberley Society member Sister Patricia Rhatigan who was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. Sister Pat, who was mentioned in our last newsletter as the state's Senior Australian of the Year for 2008, was recognised for her service to rural and remote education in indigenous communities.

Also made AO was Sir James Cruthers who was recognised for his long-standing involvement in the community and charities, mainly in health and medical research, the media and arts. Sir James is not a Kimberley Society member but he was one of the hundreds of people and organisations whose generous contributions made possible the conservation works at the ruin of the Old Halls Creek Post Office.

KIMBERLEY FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA: HELPING TO UNDERSTAND THE KIMBERLEY'S PREHISTORY

On 5 December 2007, the Kimberley Society heard from Mike Lisle-Williams, the CEO of the Kimberley Foundation (and a Kimberley Society member) and Jim Ross (Kimberley Society member and author of a chapter in our *Rock Art of the Kimberley* book).

Mike started by explaining the origins of the organisation, which originated when Susan Bradley set up the not-for-profit Bush University in 1995, with friends who had met and supported the late Grahame Walsh and were fascinated by the rock art of the Kimberley. This subsequently led to Maria and Allan Myers' decision to purchase the Theda and Doongan pastoral leases to support Walsh's research. In 2002, the organisation's present board structure was in place and its name was changed to the Kimberley Foundation Australia (KFA). Justice Henric Nicholas of the NSW Supreme Court was appointed Chairman.

Although the board supported Walsh's quest, it was a turbulent relationship. There was much support from the Myers family. The board sought to establish a Kimberley Research Centre but funding proved difficult. The Kimberley Foundation Australia developed a new plan for a research program and accepted that the road to a Kimberley research institute would take longer than originally thought. After consulting to the board, Mike was asked to become CEO and has worked in that capacity with KFA since January 2007. Sadly, Grahame Walsh died in August 2007.

Vision and mission

- Rock art has been the initial catalyst for inter-disciplinary research into history of human interaction with environment in Kimberley
- Scientific credibility and contemporary relevance
- Global context of Kimberley story and art treasures
- Contribute – knowledge, education and engagement
- Respectful approach – science and indigenous beliefs

Longer term aims

- Well funded ongoing research program e.g. via Kimberley Research Institute
- Open communication of findings
 - Peer-reviewed scholarly publications
 - Popular media
- Protection of rock art and research resources

Mike also outlined funding initiatives, links with the WA Museum, the web site, the Qantas Kimberley Archive media and communication plans.

Jim Ross then took over, for a detailed look at future activities. The Scientific Advisory Council has as members our own Past President Mike Donaldson, Prof Sue O'Connor, also a participant and author of our Rock Art Seminar, and other eminent names in the sphere. This committee will advise, monitor, evaluate, engage specialists and encourage best practice in the area.

The Six Key Research Questions

- The antiquity and continuity of habitation: during the Pleistocene, last glacial maximum, and the Holocene.

- Analysis of rock art: particularly its physical features and age; its patterns and content; and also its preservation and protection.
- The palaeo-climatological framework during habitation, and projection of climate change into the future.
- The palaeoecological framework during habitation at the local and regional scale.
- The broader regional significance of the timing of habitation (including the timing and locations of migratory routes across, and from, the Indonesian archipelago).
- The distribution, chronology and significance of Macassan and historic sites in the Kimberley Region.

Jim then explained the significance of monsoonal rainfall changes in the evolution of alluvial deposits and the importance of palaeo-hydrological reconstruction using flood deposits. He outlined the six research projects that KFA's board had just agreed to support and their importance in starting the research program. He expected that 2008 and 2009 would see a lot of progress.

The Future

- A robust research program
 - Scholarly credibility
 - Refereed publications
 - Wide communication through digital media
- Education and training
 - Indigenous communities
 - Working with/ through educational institutions
 - A chair of Kimberley Human and Environmental History?
- Kimberley Research Institute
- Global alliances

Challenges

- Protection of Kimberley rock art and research resources
 - High stakes
 - Cooperation with other environmental groups
 - A balanced, managed approach
- Continuity of funding
- Effective relationships with indigenous communities and organisations
- Global visibility

There followed a lively question time, particularly concerning Aboriginal participation in both the organisation and the research program.

Hamish McGlashan & Daphne Choules Edinger

AWARDS

In December, Positive Image Awards were presented to secondary school students who have been recognised for promoting a positive image of young people within their school or community. The Kimberley district award went to Carlise Grant of Oombulgurri Remote Community School.

BOOK REVIEW

In the desert: Jimmy Pike as a boy by Pat Lowe. Penguin Books (Australia), Camberwell (Vic), 2007. Paperback, 172 pages, illustrated, ISBN 13: 9780143003083, RRP \$18.95.

This comparatively short book, written by the Kimberley Society member who will be our February speaker, is interesting on several levels. It opens with very readable explanatory material in which a foreword (11 pages) tells how the book came into being and how the author sought to present the late Jimmy Pike's account of his early life as faithfully as she could. A 15-page introduction then describes the practices, beliefs and discipline that governed the lives of Aboriginal people in the Great Sandy Desert in the 1940s and 1950s. The desert is depicted in a map positioned opposite the first page of the preface. The reader who starts from page 1 thus acquires an excellent grounding before he or she reads about the formative years of a man who became one of Australia's best-known Aboriginal artists.

Pat Lowe's skill as an award-winning author is evident throughout the book. She relates some of the stories in Jimmy's words and others as she recalls them. She also provides context for each story. The result is a seamless blending of stories about a boy's life with facts about indigenous culture and survival.

Pat's familiarity with the desert, gained through living there with Jimmy for the best part of four years, is evident. So, too, is her somewhat reluctant acceptance of 'the sort of callousness necessary to the hunter'.

No attempt has been made to date the stories, or to put them into chronological order. To have done so would have carried the risk of getting the dates and the sequence wrong. A logical progression exists, however, and it reveals the gradual fashion in which the Walmajarri and other desert people, influenced by both coercion and a desire to experience new things, moved towards the sheep and cattle stations on the south side of the Fitzroy River. It also touches on the interaction that occurred between the desert people and others (indigenous and non-indigenous) who worked on the stations.

In reading this book, I particularly appreciated its balanced delivery of information about things that include the exodus of the Walmajarri people from the desert. Life with Jimmy Pike opened Pat Lowe's eyes to a culture vastly different to her English upbringing. Keenly interested in his experiences and his country, she gleaned extensive knowledge of both. Her work as a psychologist no doubt helped to turn that knowledge into a book but, without her finely honed writing skills, it would not have been such an interesting read.

Pat Lowe's mastery of the written word is evident in the breadth of her output. Her other works include the Penguin novels *The Girl with No Name* and *Feeling the Heat*. The latter book won the 2003 WA Premier's Literary Award in the Young Adults category. She had previously written *The Boab Tree* (Thomas C. Lothian Pty Ltd, Port Melbourne, 1998) and a suite of books with Jimmy Pike -- *Jilji: Life in the Great Sandy Desert* (Magabala Books, Broome, 1990), *Yinti: Desert Child* (Magabala, 1992), *Desert Dog* (Magabala, 1997), *Jimmy and Pat meet the Queen* (Backroom Press, Broome, 1997), and *Desert Cowboy* (Magabala, 2000). More recently there has been *Two Sisters: The stories of Jukana & Ngarta* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2004) in which Pat told Ngarta's story while Jukana wrote in the Walmajarri language and had her life story translated by Eirlys Richards.

Cathie Clement

REST IN PEACE

On 11 October 2007, Jarnoowarny (Stanley) Mirindo, a Gooniyandi man known for his dancing and acting, passed away after suffering a heart attack. Born near Fitzroy Crossing on 10 October 1960, he was the son of Suzie (a domestic worker) and Dave Lamey (the gardener on Gogo Station). In an obituary published in *The West Australian* on 30 November, Marg Carroll, Joe Ross, and Laurie and Rosita Shaw provided an account of Stanley's life.

Stanley Mirindo moved into dance and drama after studying bookkeeping in Port Hedland and community development in South Australia and the Northern Territory. He then trained with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre in Sydney for six months, and appeared in Jimmy Chi's *Bran Nue Dae* in 1993, playing an eye-catching role as the police aide in the musical's national tour. Three years later, he was in his best known role, as Tjulpu Tjangala, starring with Bryan Brown and Ernie Dingo in the film *Dead Heart*.

At the age of 40, Stanley became the leader of the Gooniyandi people, a step that reflected the spirit his father had shown in founding the Bayulu Community on land excised from Gogo Station. He lived at Bayulu with his wife Raelene (nee Hillman) and their daughter April, working at various times as a tour guide for Nogooloodoo Bush Adventures and as a cross-cultural trainer. He was buried at Bayulu in November. Had he lived, he would have put in another memorable performance in a lead role in *Jandamarra* at the Perth International Arts Festival.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 15th AGM of Kimberley Society (Inc.) will be held at Shenton Park Community Centre, corner of Onslow and Herbert Roads, Shenton Park, on Wednesday, 5 March 2008, at 7.30 p.m. The Agenda will comprise: the President's Welcome, Apologies, Minutes of the previous AGM, Business arising from the Minutes, Council Report, Treasurer's Report and presentation of Accounts for approval, Election of Office Bearers and other Councillors, and General Business. The meeting will be followed by a presentation from a guest speaker and social contact over a cup of tea/coffee.

The draft Minutes of the 2007 AGM were published on page 7 of the *Boab Bulletin* in April 2007. The associated Statement of Income and Expenditure was published on the following page.

Hamish McGlashan, President (Perth, 31 January 2008)

NOMINATION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND OTHER COUNCILLORS FOR THE YEAR 2008–2009

The Constitution of Kimberley Society Inc. requires that the Council shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Membership Secretary, a Treasurer, and not less than 3, or more than 7, other persons, all of whom shall be Members of the Society.

In the interest of conservation, nomination forms will be available only at the February meeting or by request from Cathie Clement (e-mail clement@q-net.net.au or phone 08 9272 3308). Forms must reach the Society by 5.00 P.M. on Tuesday, 12 February 2008 and, whilst facsimiles will be accepted (08 9272 2087), the original form must reach the Society by 7.15 p.m. on Wednesday, 5 March 2008. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the Council, further nominations will be received at the Annual General Meeting. Should any positions remain vacant at the conclusion of the AGM, such vacancies will be deemed casual vacancies and may be dealt with by the Council according to the Constitution.

JANDAMARRA

After an incredibly long gestation period, the stage presentation of *Jandamarra* will have its world premiere at the Perth International Arts Festival in February. Written by Steve Hawke, and directed by Tom Gutteridge, the play will be presented in Bunuba, English and Kriol, with English subtitles. The presentation was first envisaged as a feature film, with Bunuba Films being established in 1984 and acquiring funding to present the film during Australia's bicentennial celebrations. That did not happen but June Oscar, a Bunuba woman who is a community leader at Fitzroy Crossing, remained a driving force. As a director of Bunuba Films, she ensured that, despite the setbacks, the group never lost sight of its intention to take the story of Jandamarra to the world. Most Kimberley Society members will be familiar with the story, which was the subject of Ion Idriess's 1952 book *Outlaw of the Leopolds* and has been related in other books and numerous articles since then. The best known of those works is *Jandamarra and the Bunuba Resistance* (Magabala Books, Broome, 1995, since reprinted) in which Banjo Woorunmurra worked with co-author Howard Pedersen to tell the story from the Bunuba perspective.

A year before Banjo Woorunmurra's version appeared, Steve Hawke began working on the Jandamarra film project. Four years later, the Australian office of Mel Gibson's Icon film company closed, wiping out the vision of producing a big-budget epic film. Then, in 2004, Steve Hawke joined forces with the 60 Bunuba people who would eventually become involved in the development and production of the play. More information about the play and Jandamarra is available in the feature that appeared in the *West Weekend Magazine*, published as part of *The West Australian* on 26 January.

DERBY

REUNION.

MARCH 2 nd.

**Sunday, Labor Day Weekend
10am to after lunch,
cnr Saw Avenue and May Drive,
King's Park.
B.Y.O. folding chairs, food and
drink, and lots of memorabilia.
Let other Derbyites know please !!**

Enquiries;

Marie 08/ 92916079

Pat 08/ 92793492.



REST IN PEACE

On 19 December, the Kalumburu Community lost Sister Scholastica, one of its last three nuns. Born 90 years ago in Spain as Josephine Carillo, Sister Scholastica was widely known for her good works and for her 20-plus years of scooter riding at the community. She came to Australia in the late 1940s, having decided to become a Benedictine nun after seeing the hardships inflicted by the Spanish Civil War. After two years at the New Norcia Benedictine community, she was sent to Kalumburu where her duties included teaching, cooking, gardening, working in the poultry farm, and acting as a surrogate mother to children who had no one else to look after them. Sister Scholastica was naturalised in 1956 and received a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1994 in recognition of service to the Aboriginal community at Kalumburu Mission. Her funeral took place on 22 December.



Don't forget, this is your newsletter.

News or coverage of Kimberley events and other items of interest are most welcome.

Items can be sent to clement@q-net.net.au or to the post box.

COUNCIL 2007-2008

President:	Hamish McGlashan
Vice-Presidents:	Jack Vercoe and Cathie Clement
Secretary:	Jeff Gresham
Membership Secretary:	Mike Donaldson
Treasurer:	Gilbert Marsh
Councillors:	Kevin Kenneally, Daphne Edinger, Susan Clarkson and Adrienne Boulter

Grant Sellwood manages the Kimberley Society's Web site (www.kimberleysociety.org). It carries summaries of the Society's talks (as published in the *Boab Bulletin* but sometimes with additional images), FAQs, and information about the Society and how to join it.

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Dr Cathie Clement OAM edits this newsletter for the Kimberley Society. The material it contains is copyright but may be cited with acknowledgment. Correspondence, including requests to reproduce articles, reports or book notes, should be directed to The Editor, Kimberley Society, PO Box 8471, Perth Business Centre, Perth, WA, 6849; E-mail clement@q-net.net.au; telephone (08) 9272 3308; or facsimile (08) 9272 2087.

DISCLAIMER: The opinions and the information presented in this newsletter are offered solely to inform members about matters that may interest them. The Council of the Kimberley Society accepts no responsibility for the newsletter's content, and it advises readers to obtain appropriate advice before they either apply information from the newsletter to particular circumstances or use it as a basis for formulating decisions.