

Archaeology Seminar Series 2021

Highways to the Interior: investigating the archaeology and social history of Australia's River Systems

Brad Duncan

Heritage New South Wales / University of New England



Prior to the introduction of major road networks across Australia, rivers acted as highways to the interior, linking vast expanses of prime agricultural land, natural resources and industries with local, national and international markets. Regardless of their size, navigable river systems also facilitated social and cultural contact between townships, not only by bringing valuable produce into and out of often remote areas, but also by acting as a conduit to link disparate communities. River systems therefore represent an opportunity to study interactive riverine cultural landscapes that often transcended state

borders, linking isolated archaeological sites and oral and documentary histories, to provide a more comprehensive view of life on Australia's interior waterways. This presentation will highlight ongoing research in a number of river systems, with a particular focus on the Murray and Northern NSW River systems, to demonstrate the diversity of activities, industries, vessels and archaeological sites associated with Australian interior waterways.

SPEAKER BIO

Dr Brad Duncan is the Senior Maritime Archaeologist responsible for the Maritime Heritage Program at Heritage NSW, and Adjunct Senior Lecturer with University of New England. He is widely published in the field of maritime archaeology and specializes in maritime cultural landscapes & historic maritime infrastructure studies. His book, *Please God Send me a Wreck: Responses to Shipwrecks in a 19th Century Australian Community*, examines the social impact of shipwrecks on Victorian society. His current research projects include regional and cultural landscapes research of coastal and inland waterways, deep-water defence wrecks, climate change and geomorphological research associated with maritime and riverine heritage sites, Pacific wartime sites and communities, the maritime culture of Norfolk Island, and the evolution of Australian maritime shipbuilding techniques. Dr Duncan is the co-founder of the NSW Rivers Project, designed to explore riverine heritage across the State. Brad is the past Vice President for the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, a member of the Engineers Australia Heritage Committee (NSW), and current Australian representative on the International Congress of Maritime Museums - Maritime Archaeology Committee.

APRIL
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TIME & DATE

Zoom Webinar, Thursday
3:00 pm, Australian Eastern
Daylight Time, Melbourne,
Australia (Meeting
registration in advance
required).

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