



# AURA Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ROCK ART RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (AURA) INC.

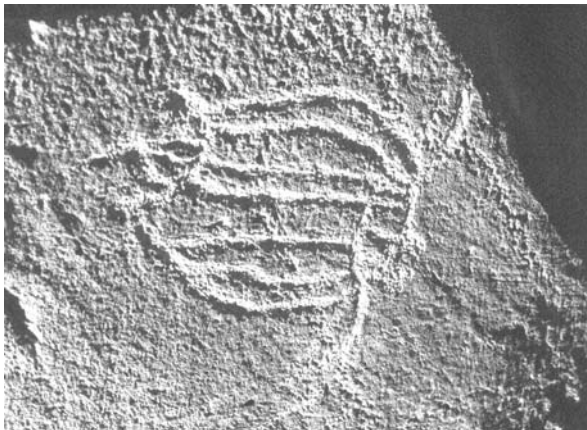
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19/2

## The campaign to save the Dampier rock art

ROBERT G. BEDNARIK



The Dampier Archipelago in the Pilbara region of north-western Australia features what is regarded as the world's largest concentration of petroglyphs. It also possesses a major corpus of standing stones, the most impressive such occurrence in Australia. This outstanding body of Aboriginal rock art is considered to be the greatest non-European cultural heritage property in Australia, and is thus one of the major heritage sites in the world.

During the 1960s major industrial facilities were established in the remote archipelago. Current plans by the Western Australian government of further extensions to this industrial complex designate 38% of the land area to be occupied by petrochemical and other plants.

At present levels of atmospheric pollution, most of the Dampier petroglyphs will disappear during the second half of the 21st century. However, if the emissions are trebled, as proposed by the W.A. government, this process will be accelerated

greatly, and scientific data predict that the rock art will begin to disappear by about 2030.

The expansion of the industrial complex by adding a multi-billion dollar petrochemical industry is opposed by scientists, conservators, conservationists, many politicians, the overwhelming majority of the local residents, and most importantly by the owners of the rock art, Aboriginal people of the region. Moreover, the local shire council objects to it, and a public rally held at Hearson Cove on 9 June 2002 attended by 600 local residents voted unanimously that the new industrial development be located at Maitland on the mainland, an industrial estate set aside for this very purpose. Another recent development is that one of the dozen or so companies involved in this development, Methanex Australia P/L, released its internal scientific impact report, which agrees substantially with the reports by AURA scientists (Vinnicombe 2002; Bednarik 2002). Indeed, some of the emission data Bednarik used in his analyses are actually lower than those admitted by Methanex.

The International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) demands that the State Government exercises its responsibility of protecting the Dampier rock art, that it implements a management plan for the archipelago after proper consultation of the stakeholders, and that it grants the land to the relevant traditional owners of the archipelago, to be leased to the federal government as a National Park. AURA has been involved in a dialogue with the Western Australian government throughout the first half of 2002, and together with IFRAO has established a major campaign involving various stakeholders, with the aim of convincing the recalcitrant state government to secure the perpetual protection of the Dampier rock art. AURA has established a Website that serves to inform about this struggle to save the magnificent Dampier galleries of hundreds of thousands of irreplaceable rock art images. It includes an international Internet petition soliciting signatures now:

Please help AURA and IFRAO to save the largest petroglyph concentration in the world, visit

**<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/dampier/index.html>**

proceed to the Petition at the bottom of the page, and sign it with your own comments.

To ship the incredible wealth of the Pilbara's iron ore to the hungry furnaces of the world, deep harbours had to be built and in the early 1960s it was proposed to construct a deepwater port for loading iron ore on Depuch Island (to the east of Dampier). The Western Australian Museum conducted an impact study of the island, finding a large body of petroglyphs. The recommendations of the Museum's team (Ride and Neumann 1964) effectively led to the abandonment of the plan, and to developing instead the loading facilities at Dampier during the mid-1960s. The developers conveniently overlooked the fact that there was much more rock art in the vicinity of the Dampier facilities than on Depuch. From this time on the preservation of the Dampier petroglyphs became the subject of policies driven by developers rather than public authorities, and it is significant to note that this was the result of a deliberate cover-up. After the discovery of substantial natural gas deposits offshore a massive gas treatment plant and further loading facilities were installed in the 1980s, and almost 20% of the main island, Murujuga (Burrup) is presently occupied by industrial, residential and infrastructure development. In the process between 20-25% of the rock art has been destroyed since 1964.

Legally the Western Australian government is responsible for the protection and preservation of the state's cultural heritage. More specifically, in accordance with the 1974 *Aboriginal Heritage Act* the Minister for Indigenous Affairs bears this responsibility. In relation to the petroglyphs of the Dampier Archipelago, the state government has consistently abrogated its responsibility and has asked various mining and other companies operating at Dampier to take responsibility for the rock art. To place this into its proper perspective it must be appreciated that:

- A. With perhaps more than 200,000 figures (some estimates are as high as one million motifs) the Dampier corpus of rock art is reputedly the largest concentration of petroglyphs in the world.
- B. The islands also comprise Australia's largest number of standing stones and other stone arrangements.
- C. The Dampier corpus is the largest non-European cultural heritage property of Australia.

I have opposed the destruction of rock art at Dampier since the 1960s, and in subsequent decades several other rock art researchers and archaeologists have added their voices to my demands, which were published in this very newsletter (Bednarik 1994):

1. Nomination of the peninsula to World Heritage status.
2. The return of all untenanted land to the surviving Aboriginal communities, perhaps with a proviso that they lease part of it as a National Park to the Commonwealth.
3. The permanent installation of a rock art ranger, who should have full jurisdiction over any rock art on leased land, besides assisting the managers of the conservation zone and liaising with traditional custodians.
4. That the perpetual conservation and cultural integrity of this enormous cultural asset be safeguarded and supervised by a federal government agency of scientific repute, preferably the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

No action has been taken by any government of Western Australia to address any one of these requests. In August 2002, there exists no management plan for Dampier, and no form of protection for any of the rock art, be it on company land or unoccupied land. No study has ever been attempted by the relevant authorities to establish the effects of development on the rock art and other cultural heritage material, especially from acid rain. The government has never made an effort to compile

an inventory of the rock art, we only have quantitative estimates of the corpus and some detailed work in specific areas marked for destruction. No land has ever been repatriated to the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land, who continue to live nearby (mostly at Roebourne) and who wish to have the rock art returned to them. Much of it is sacred to them, consisting of Dreaming sites and the locally very important *thalu* sites, which are important increase sites. They served in rituals ensuring the balance of nature by increasing those elements that are necessary for survival.

Currently there are plans before the government of Western Australia that will result in a very different kind of increase, in an increase of the atmospheric pollution emissions by roughly 300%. This amounts to an increase for the whole state, which is four times the size of Texas, of 27%. Emissions are currently already so high that they damage the rock art (Bednarik 2002).

The government has recently attracted massive industrial investments and intends to expand the development dramatically, still unperturbed by the effects on the area's most important resource, its cultural monuments. It now intends to add a multi-billion dollar petrochemical complex to the existing industries. There is absolutely no practical reason why this development could not be in the nearby coastal plains of the Pilbara, which are entirely unoccupied and of no environmental significance. Indeed, a large heavy industry estate called Maitland has been earmarked for many years on the mainland, southwest of Dampier, and this is where most stakeholders would prefer the new industry to be established. This is where the Aborigines, who owned the Dampier land before the infamous White Foam Massacre of 1868, want the development to be. This is where the local shire council and most local residents want it to go. The conservationists wanting to protect the natural environment of the Dampier Archipelago agree wholeheartedly, as does every other stakeholder in the issue. Even at least one of the companies involved in these plans, Methanex, prefers Maitland because of the considerable logistic difficulties on the islands.

The Maitland Estate will be developed in any case because there is very limited room on the islands for development. They are mostly covered by huge boulder piles and very narrow valleys, entirely unsuitable for any form of construction. The cost of the Maitland infrastructure is about \$300 million, the cost of the planned Murujuga (Burrup) infrastructure is \$221 million, total cost \$521 million. But the development of Maitland, where the supply of land is almost unlimited, eliminates the need to first develop the unsuitable Murujuga sites. In other words, the government of Western Australia is prepared to waste \$221 million of public funds just so that it can avoid admitting that it has made a mistake.

We know from the examples of the Coa and Guadiana valleys in Portugal how costly mistakes can be when the protection of rock art is involved. The International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) which has led the campaigns in these cases is opposed to the senseless destruction of rock art. On 14 February 2002, upon realising that there was no satisfactory solution to be expected from the State Government, IFRAO advised the Premier, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Minister for State Development and Tourism, the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development and the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources that these plans would be opposed and defeated.

Supported by the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA) through President Kenneth Mulvaney and a Green parliamentarian, Robin Chapple MLC, a campaign to save the Dampier rock art was commenced. In the course of the follow-

ing six months there has been much correspondence but on the whole very little progress. I believe that we have explored every possible avenue to resolve this matter by petition or appeal. Recently I have suggested to the Premier of Western Australia a totally different development strategy, now known as the 'nodal plan': there is no logistic, economic or practical reason for the dozen or so companies to be all located in one place. Most of them are dependent on only one thing, the availability of cheap natural gas. The pipeline already extends 1800 km to Bunbury, so any of these plants could be set up anywhere along its route. There are clear political advantages in spreading the development along the western coast, over several electorates. But more importantly, this nodal model also spreads the pollution over a huge land area, instead of focusing all of it in the one location. This plan is currently being investigated by the government, which has so far limited its response to establishing a task force to check the scientific data presented in Bednarik (2002). This is itself entirely futile, because the emission data has already been corroborated by the industry itself. The planned task force was abandoned after four weeks in favour of a four-year study of the rock art deterioration. Clearly this is an inept, dithering and procrastinating government unable to make a hard decision, and

unable or unwilling to get the stakeholders to hammer out a solution.

We now seek the support of all who value the heritage of humanity to help save this magnificent rock art gallery from the entirely needless destruction by an uncaring government. This issue is not a confrontation between pro- and anti-development parties: nobody is opposed to the region's industrial development as such. All parties are merely opposed to the unnecessary siting of the largest polluter in the country at precisely the same location as the largest petroglyph concentration in the world.

#### REFERENCES

- BEDNARIK, R. G. 1994. Dampier rock art under siege. *AURA Newsletter* 11(2): 14–15.
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Please visit <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/dampier/index.html>

## A brief history of the Dampier issue

1868 - The Aboriginal occupation of the Dampier Archipelago ends abruptly when the Yaburara, the traditional clan occupying most of it, are decimated in the premeditated Flying Foam Massacre by a posse of Europeans. Only three people are known to have survived, they were shipped off to Rottnest Island.

1962 - In response to a proposal to construct a deep-water port on Depuch Island, east of the Dampier Archipelago, the Western Australian Museum conducts an impact study. It finds concentrations of rock art and the plan is abandoned.

1963/64 - Government and mining interests decide to build the harbour on Dampier Island instead. No mention of any rock art is made.

1967 - R. G. Bednarik commences his survey of the Dampier rock art, registering some 570 petroglyph sites and numerous rock arrangements over the next three years. He witnesses destruction of rock art and asks the Western Australian Museum to protect the petroglyphs, and he commences a long-term study of their deterioration.

1971 - The first major natural gas deposits on the Northwest Shelf are discovered off the coast.

1972 to 1978 - Several further rock art researchers, including F. L. Virili, W. Dix, B. Wright, M. Lorblanchet, S. Hallam and J. Clarke, examine the Dampier rock art corpus and recommend that it be appropriately protected.

1977 - The practice of employing archaeologists to study Dampier rock art commences. In all cases this is done to facilitate industrial development, and not to better our knowledge about the rock art. No comprehensive inventory of the petroglyphs has ever been attempted by a government agency and these studies involved no consultation of Indigenous interests.

1979 - Dampier Island is renamed Burrup Peninsula, after the 19th century Roebourne bank clerk Henry Burrup.

1980 - Woodside Offshore Petroleum employs archaeologists to remove rock art on a large scale. The traditional owners are not consulted, and no attempt is made to assess the impact of the petrochemical development. Almost 2000 engraved boulders are deposited in a fenced-in 'temporary' storage area at Hearson Cove, where they languish to the present day.

1982 - The construction of the Dampier-Perth natural gas pipeline commences.

1987 - The traditional owners of the rock art are for the first time consulted in an environmental impact study, conducted by the Department of Conservation and Land Management rather than the Department of Indigenous Affairs.

1994 - R. G. Bednarik proposes the archipelago's declaration as a National Park, return of the land to Aboriginal ownership, and nomination to World Heritage list, eliciting positive responses from local NGOs and environmentalists but not a single response from anyone else.

1996 - The government announces the development of the Maitland Heavy Industry Estate, located on the mainland to the south-east of Dampier.

2001 - A plan to significantly increase the industrial capacity on Murujuga (the "Burrup Peninsula") is announced.

January 2002 - The Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA) and the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations (IFRAO) decide to oppose the expansion of the petrochemical plants, because similar development has already caused the loss of 20–25% of the Murujuga rock art.

February 2002 - IFRAO and AURA advise the Western Australian Premier and all relevant Ministers formally of their opposition.

March 2002 - Green MP R. Chapple MLC petitions the government on behalf of the Murujuga rock art, in correspondence

and by raising the matter repeatedly in parliament. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, A. Carpenter MLA, advises IFRAO that he cannot guarantee that no further rock art will be relocated.

April 2002 - In response to this IFRAO steps up its campaign and recruits support, advising the Premier and several Ministers that their positions are untenable. The establishment of an independent committee is requested. Application is made to the National Trust of Australia to list Murujuga as an Endangered Site. AURA establishes a Webpage to serve the Dampier campaign.

May 2002 - Separate scientific reports by Dr P. Vinnicombe and R. G. Bednarik are published in *Rock Art Research*, and their publication is immediately followed by a very effective media campaign. The paper by Bednarik is so often cited in parliament and copies are in such demand that it is placed on the Internet. The traditional owners are offered a compensation package, together with an ultimatum to accept it by the end of the month.

June 2002 - In response to the Bednarik paper, the government announces the establishment of an expert panel to assess the claims made in it. The media reports the appalling conditions of the 2000 petroglyph boulders deposited in a compound in the 1980s. The local Shire President announces that the shire council has not been consulted in the planning. IFRAO accuses the government of cultural vandalism and economic mismanagement, AURA launches an Internet petition on its Website.

9 June 2002 - A major public rally is held at Hearson Cove, which turns into a demonstration in favour of the rock art, demanding unanimously that the industrial development be located at Maitland. This establishes clearly the strength of local support for the campaign.

28 June - The government member for the Pilbara, F. Riebeling MLA, questions that the government's policies do produce acid

expansion plans, Methanex Pty Ltd, released its own scientific impact report, which not only agrees with the claims made by IFRAO, but even exceeds these in severity. Indeed, Methanex volunteers to contribute constructively to any endeavour addressing environmental concerns.

8 July - IFRAO attacks the government over its dithering and procrastination, and its insensitive handling of such issues as the negotiations with the traditional owners, emphasising the much more constructive attitudes of some of the companies on whose behalf the government claims to speak.

15 July - IFRAO predicts that some of the companies may well reconsider their involvement in view of the uncertainty the government creates by dithering, accusing it of endangering the projects.

18 July - The government's negotiations with the three native claimant groups have been marred by incompetence and heavy-handedness. Its strategy of pitching one group against the others has caused division and a solution appears to have become increasingly remote.

23 July - The Federal Treasurer, Hon. P. Costello, visits Murujuga to inspect the Woodside complex, stating to the media that the environmental concerns need to be resolved. This follows a few days after the elections in Tasmania, in which the Greens increased the number of their seats fourfold.

25 July - The government announces that it will conduct an independent four-year study of the deterioration R. G. Bednarik has already studied for 35 years. It is not clear how the wishes of companies wanting to commence their projects in the meantime will be accommodated. While this vindicates the concerns that led to this campaign in the first place, it is also clear that the government still does not comprehend the implications of its inaction concerning Maitland.



rain. Yet at the same time one of the companies involved in the

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## AURANET under construction

AURANET, the Internet presence of AURA, has now been in operation for a few months. It is intended to become the largest and most comprehensive Internet site on rock art, with a target size of 1000 MB (1 GB). This is expected to take two years to achieve. While there will be numerous forums (some are already active), chat groups and so forth, the principal purpose of AURANET is to provide a substantial and comprehensive resource for study and research, in the established tradition of AURA. This will be achieved through the inclusion of hundreds of carefully selected research articles, together forming the largest academic rock art library available anywhere.

A recently added homepage, *Rock art dating*, serves to illustrate the strategy. This page opens with an introduction consisting of a series of almost twenty modules, outlining the entire field of rock art age estimation. For the more demanding reader and the serious researcher, there is then a library that will ultimately comprise over fifty of the most important rock art dating publications ever produced. To see this concept in operation, please go to

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/date/index.html>***

AURANET is a partnership between My Connected Community (or mc<sup>2</sup>), a Victorian government initiative, therefore it is available free to all subscribers and it will always remain free of advertising. To connect to the AURANET community, simply open *mc2.vicnet.net.au* on your Internet browser and register as a new user. You then receive a confirmation e-mail to check your e-mail address to which you must respond by clicking on the http link in its message. This enables you to log on, using your e-mail address and password. You click 'Join a Community', scroll down to 'Science & Technology', click on 'AURANET' and 'Yes'. Once you have received confirmation of your registration, you are a member of AURANET and can fully participate on any interactive pages, upload your files, announcements and comments, and occupy your own personal 10 MB site. However, you should then return to the 'Join a Community' window to select any of the currently fourteen groups and register for each one you are interested in. They are:

### **AURANET main homepage**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aura/index.html>***

### **Rock Art Research (journal)**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aura/rar.html>***

### **Rock art dating**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/date/index.html>***

### **Palaeoart epistemology**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/epistem/index.html>***

### **Cognitive archaeology**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/cognit/>***

### **Cave art research (CARA)**

***[http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/cara13/myfiles/Cave art.htm](http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/cara13/myfiles/Cave%20art.htm)***

### **Rock Art Glossary**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/glossar/index.html>***

### **Save Guadiana rock art**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/guadiana/index.html>***

### **Save Dampier rock art**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/dampier/index.html>***

### **Indigenous management of rock art sites**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/indigen/>***

### **New developments in Aboriginal arts and culture**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aborart/>***

### **Rock art recording**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/record/>***

### **AURA Español**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aura/rar.html>***

### **The First Mariners Project**

***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/mariners/>***

Our preference is that you register with each group, which will also provide you with the addresses of all other registered AURA members. For readers with little experience in using the Internet, there is a detailed explanation of the registration procedure in the May 2002 issue of *RAR*, see pages 70–71. If you should still experience any difficulties please contact the moderator of the group concerned, or *auraweb@hotmail.com*, or the help desk at mc<sup>2</sup> at *mc2@vicnet.net.au*.

AURA members with the inclination of becoming moderators of an AURAWEB site are cordially encouraged to contact the Editor, either with a proposal of their own, or by selecting one of the following subjects: rock art conservation, online study resources, the history of rock art research, regional rock art studies, or non-English language pages (e.g. French, Russian, Chinese). Support is available for training, ISP costs, software and in some cases hardware.

Robert G. Bednarik, Webmaster of AURANET

Please visit AURANET at  
***<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aura/index.html>***

Monograph series of OCCASIONAL AURA PUBLICATIONS

Number 4, 1991: ***Rock art and posterity: conserving, managing and recording rock art***, edited by Colin Pearson and B. K. Swartz, Jr. Proceedings of Symposia M ('Conservation and site management') and E ('Recording and standardisation in rock art studies') of the First AURA Congress, with contributions by 31 authors. 160 pages, 40 plates, 22 line drawings, 21 maps, 19 tables, paperback, RRP \$A26.00. ISBN 0 646 03751 X.  
Special offer to AURA members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A20.70** in Australia, **US\$22.30** elsewhere.

Number 5, 1992: ***Rock art and ethnography***, edited by M. J. Morwood and D. R. Hobbs, proceedings of Symposium H ('Rock art and ethnography'); bound with ***Retouch: maintenance and conservation of Aboriginal rock imagery***, edited by G. K. Ward, proceedings of Symposium O ('Retouch: an option to conservation?') of the First AURA Congress, with contributions by 21 authors. 140 pages, 60 plates, 23 line drawings, 2 maps, 2 tables, paperback, RRP \$A34.00. ISBN 0 646 04920 8.

Special offer to AURA members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A25.00** in Australia, **US\$25.30** elsewhere.

Number 6, 1992: ***State of the art: regional rock art studies in Australia and Melanesia***, edited by Jo McDonald and Ivan P. Haskovec. Proceedings of Symposia C ('Rock art studies in Australia and Oceania') and D ('The rock art of northern Australia') of the First AURA Congress, with contributions by 23 authors. 240 pages, 33 plates, 147 line drawings, 51 maps, 36 tables, paperback, RRP \$A48.00. ISBN 0 646 09083 6.

Special offer to AURA members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A32.00** in Australia, **US\$30.60** elsewhere.

Number 8, 1993: ***Time and space***, edited by Jack Steinbring, Alan Watchman, Paul Faulstich and Paul S. C. Taçon. Proceedings of Symposia F ('The dating of rock art') and E ('Spatial considerations in rock art'), Second AURA Congress, with contributions by 23 authors. 134 pages, 101 plates and drawings, 9 tables, paperback, RRP \$A28.00. ISBN 0 646 15617 9.

Special offer to AURA members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A22.00** in Australia, **US\$22.00** elsewhere.

Number 9, 1995: ***Management of rock imagery***, edited by G. K. Ward and L. A. Ward, bound with ***Preservation of rock art***, edited by A. Thorn and J. Brunet. Proceedings of Symposia G and H of the Second AURA Congress, with contributions by 56 authors. 240 pages, 110 plates, 47 line drawings, 16 maps, 20 tables, extensive bibliographies, paperback, RRP \$A48.00. ISBN 0 9586802 0 5.

Special offer to members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A32.00** in Australia, **US\$30.60** elsewhere.

Number 10, 2000: ***Advances in dating Australian rock-markings: papers from the First Australian Rock-Picture Dating Workshop***, compiled and edited by Graeme K. Ward and Claudio Tuniz. With contributions by 31 authors. 124 pages, colour plates on covers, numerous monochrome plates, line drawings, maps and tables, paperback, RRP \$A36.00. ISBN 0 9586802 1 3.

Special offer to AURA members, 50% discount: including postage and packing **\$A26.00** in Australia, **US\$26.00** elsewhere.

Orders and correspondence to:

The Editor, AURA, P.O. Box 216, Caulfield South, Vic. 3162, Australia

### Recording equipment

As a special service to members of AURA, currently available in Australia only, AURA has acquired two sets of recording equipment. Each set consists of a high-resolution transparency and negative scanner, a high-quality digital camera, relevant software bundle, cables and adaptors, memory cards, spare batteries and manuals. These sets are intended for rapid and large volume field recording of rock art and for the digitisation of existing collections of photographic records (transparencies). Use of this equipment is particularly recommended to researchers who have access to a CD burner and a colour management system. The cost of this equipment to members is \$A20.00 per week (or \$A15.00 for either the scanner or the camera only) to cover the costs of transport and insurance. Please apply to the *RAR* editor and enclose payment for two weeks.

## AURA Inter-Congress Symposium 2003

AURA plans to hold an Inter-Congress Symposium in Victoria in 2003. It is to take place at the Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning (HIRL). Provided that there is sufficient interest expressed by potential participants (see below), mid-February has been proposed as a suitable time. The Symposium, to be chaired by R. G. Gunn and R. G. Bednarik, will include a meeting of the Moderators of AURANET.

Hamilton is a pleasant country town in western Victoria, close to the Grampians-Gariwerd National Park with its outstanding mountain scenery and many rock painting sites, but also close to the cave petroglyph concentration between Portland and Millicent. These areas will be covered by field trips of one or two days. The academic proceedings will occupy two further days. It is intended to have a bus take participants without own transport from Melbourne to Hamilton and back, which will also be used on one of the field trips.

Proposals are invited from readers for topic-based sessions as well as for individual papers. Please send titles of proposed papers and abstracts of 50–100 words to the AURA Secretary, either to

**AURA, P.O. Box 216, Caulfield South, VIC 3162, Australia,**  
or to [auraweb@hotmail.com](mailto:auraweb@hotmail.com)

### MA in Archaeology – Prehistoric Rock Art at the University of Durham (U.K.)

A new opportunity to study rock art at Masters level is offered by the University of Durham (U.K.). The Rock Art MA in Archaeology strand offers students the opportunity to gain knowledge and an understanding of rock art in its archaeological and anthropological context. It also acquaints students with the principal debates affecting the recording, interpretation, conservation and preservation of rock art. Finally, this MA strand prepares for research or further study by giving students the opportunity to investigate a topic in rock art in greater depth.

Rock art is one field in archaeological research that has seen a remarkable increase in interest in the last few years. This is because it is an ideal field for discussion of the ideological sphere of society. Research in anthropology has proved to be extremely useful for the study of rock art, and Durham University is in an exceptional good position in this respect, for this course benefits from the teaching by an archaeologist (Dr Margarita Díaz-Andreu) and by an anthropologist (Prof. Robert Layton). Our research focuses on explanations on the significance and location of rock art in relation to its landscape setting, to identities such as ethnicity and gender, to symbolism and to current issues relating the recording, preservation and management of rock art sites.

A major attraction of studying rock art at Durham is the high concentration of sites within the area. In addition to the art from County Durham, that of Yorkshire, Northumberland and even Scotland represent a teaching source students make use of during their studies. Links developed with other European countries—especially Scandinavia, Italy and Spain—can be instrumental for students willing to learn and specialise in other rock art traditions. Australian rock art is one of our other focuses of interest and American rock art counts with a well-provided library.

For further details and application form please contact: Dr M. Diaz-Andreu, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, U.K.  
E-mail: [m.diaz-andreu@durham.ac.uk](mailto:m.diaz-andreu@durham.ac.uk)

#### Conservation project by SAPAR in Siberia

At the end of 2001 the Siberian Association of Prehistoric

Art Researchers (SAPAR) won a competition in the support program for professional associations in the humanities and social sciences from the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) and received a grant for 2002. The main goal of the project for which it applied is to launch work on the preservation of monuments of ancient Siberian art, to attract public attention to this problem, and to outline some solutions.

Siberia is huge and contains many hundreds of sites; we therefore propose to start in one of the regions that is most at risk, the constantly changing banks of the Krasnoyarsk reservoir on the Yenisei. We will investigate the current state of several major rock art sites on the banks of the middle course of the Yenisei, such as Oglakhty, Shalabolino, Sukhanikha, Tepsei and Kunya. Our choice of subjects is determined both by the fact that those taking part in the project—SAPAR members—have already been carrying out investigations at these sites since the 1960s, and by the fact that these sites were flooded by the waters of the Krasnoyarsk hydro-electric power station. At present, the water drops every summer to its original level, which enables us to investigate the rocks on the riverbanks in the southern part of the reservoir, and to assess what impact their being under the water has had on the preservation of the petroglyphs. In addition, we propose to study the influence of other factors—natural decay (unstable taluses, weathering, lichens etc.), climatic change, urbanisation, excessively intensive recording etc.—at a number of smaller sites. Thus, the project aims to elicit information on the consequences of the influence of humans and nature on rock art preservation, to determine the degree of preservation of each site, and the causes of petroglyph destruction. The results of this research will give us some idea of the extent of what has been lost, and will help us formulate a scientific basis for future conservation projects.

The project will incorporate several different phases:

- (1) In the course of this year, work will be carried out on these problems in archives, museums and libraries.
- (2) In July 2002, an expedition to investigate the current state of rock art sites on the Middle Yenisei took place.
- (3) In late July/early August, restorers and other specialists work at the sites, working out a program for conservation, restoration and management of the rock art sites of the Middle Yenisei.
- (4) On 7th–13th August, an international field seminar on 'Problems in the preservation of pre-Historic art monu-

ments' takes place in Abakan, Khakassia, with excursions to the sites.

- (5) In September–December, a rock art exhibition will be planned and designed in Kemerovo.
- (6) In the course of this year, a special issue of the *SAPAR Bulletin* will be published, devoted to the problems of preservation of pre-Historic art, as well as the proceedings of the international seminar and the results of the expedition. We

will also produce a video film about the program for distribution to schools etc., and will explain the project to the general public through the media and the Internet.

Further information about this project can be obtained at the following addresses:  
*sher@kemsu.ru* and *elenam@relay.kuzbass.net*

## AURA Treasurer's financial statement 2001/2002

### ELFRIEDE BEDNARIK

**Balance in hand on 30 June 2001: \$10 621.33**

INCOME:		EXPENDITURES:	
Sales of books	1527.62	Postage	522.85
Bank interest	336.12	Grant expenditures	6295.75
IYV grant	3832.00	Computer peripherals	114.45
MCC grant, part 1	11 000.00	Bulk orders, IGRMS	316.67
Sundry income	87.50	Business Affairs Registration	33.00
		Telephone and Faxes	117.24
		Congress refund	60.00
		Stationery	136.12
		Subscriptions	107.45
		Bank fees	168.41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16 783.24</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7871.94</b>

**Balance in hand on 30 June 2001: \$19 532.63**

The statement indicates a significant improvement since the previous financial year. I can report with pleasure that there has been almost a doubling of AURA's cash reserves, attributable largely to the securing of two grants by the Secretary. These cover the costs of two important new services to the members: the recording equipment sets now available to them (*RAR* 18: 106) and the rapidly growing Internet presence of AURA. In addition to these

cash reserves, AURA holds also over \$20 000 worth of stock in books and congress merchandise, and the Secretary anticipates further initiatives designed to improve AURA's fiscal position.

Elfriede Bednarik  
 Treasurer of AURA

Please visit AURANET at  
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/users/aura/index.html>

### AURA Newsletter

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