Abstracts

**March 13** Julia Martínez (University of Wollongong), *The politics of missing archival files: American involvement in the 1932 League of Nations’ report on ‘traffic in the East’*

Inspired by Antoinette Burton’s *Archive Stories* in this paper I reflect on my recent archival experiences in the search for files on the ‘traffic in women’ in the American-occupied Philippines. The official 1932 League of Nations publication on the ‘Traffic in women and children in the East’ dwelt at length on Chinese and Japanese women, but the Philippines was barely mentioned. According to American historians, the U.S. administration had little interest in policing prostitution and it was presumed that the Philippines administration was not involved in the regional investigation. Armed with the knowledge that the League of Nations’ investigation had been funded by the Rockefeller, Bureau of Social Hygiene, I was curious to see how they could have permitted such an omission. In this paper I trace my investigations into the process of compiling and editing the report, and consider how the deliberate removal of archival files highlights the political pressures that influenced the official narrative of this controversial aspect of colonial history.

**March 20** Peg Fraser (Monash University), *Strathewen: Hierarchies of loss after Black Saturday*

This paper explores different experiences of loss—physical, social and emotional—in one small settlement northeast of Melbourne, using oral history interviews narrated for Museum Victoria’s Victorian Bushfires Collection. ‘Social comparison’ is an inevitable and perhaps necessary response to catastrophic change, but different and complex hierarchies emerge both among bushfire survivors and between survivors and the larger society. The oral histories also reveal that loss is often, but not always, interwoven with a determination to assert agency and a search for opportunity. Yet an oral history interview is itself an opportunity and many narrators used the process to construct meaningful stories of their lives but also to reinforce or to challenge perceived public narratives of bushfire.

**March 27** Kimberley-Joy Knight (University of Sydney), *A reassessment of the affective piety of Dominic and the early Dominicans*

Dominic of Caleruega (c.1170-1221), founder of the Dominicans, may not seem at first glance a remarkably lachrymose saint. The sources that inform us of his life and devotional practices vary in their treatment of his tears. In some texts Dominic’s tears barely wet the pages whereas in others, his tearful devotions stream from one passage to the next. Dominic’s affective piety and divine gifts have not been subject to the same scrutiny and scholarly examination as that of his contemporary, Francis of Assisi (d.1226). By comparison, Dominic has been characterised as a decorous saint who eschewed emotional displays of his sanctity. Using the breadth of thirteenth-century hagiographical sources
relating to Dominic, this paper will elucidate how tears were both an essential marker of the founder’s sanctity and an important part of early Dominican spirituality. It will argue for a reassessment of Dominic and his early followers suggesting that scholarship, which has focused on the intellectualism of Thomism or the somatic piety of Francis and thirteenth-century female mystics, has precluded a true study of early Dominican spirituality, which was tender, affective, and lachrymose.

April 17 Janet Golden (Rutgers University), Babies Made Us Modern

Did babies really make us modern? No, of course not. No single group or event or discovery made that happen. But babies played a critical role in linking ordinary Americans to the modern revolutions of the twentieth century—the revolutions in scientific medicine, in consumer culture, in the rise of the social welfare state, and in the acceptance new ideas regarding the human development.

Historians have begun to play close attention to the history of children and childhood, but babies do not appear in many of these histories, perhaps because they are not seen as having agency. But they were historical actors—because of their vulnerability. Their high rates of morbidity and mortality forced or enabled others to act on their behalf. The state, the marketplace, public health officials, and philanthropists, all invested, albeit for different reasons, in their survival. And the more they survived, the more they became objects of study for psychologists and drivers of consumption in the marketplace.

My talk will discuss the arguments I will make in my book and my sources of information (largely baby books kept by mothers). I look forward to questions and suggestions from the audience.

April 24 Graeme Davison (Monash University), Travels in Ancestryland

Family history may be the oldest, and is still the most popular, form of history. For most of my life, however, I have resisted it. I am easily bored by genealogy and irritated the noisy presence of family enthusiasts in public libraries and archives. I have written critically about the recent boom in ancestor-worship and the operations of online genealogical sites like Ancestry.com. But in 2013, prompted by a visit from my sister, now living in England, I embarked on what I expected to be a short excursion into the history of my mother’s forebears. Two years later Allen and Unwin is about to publish Lost Relations: fortunes of my family in Australia’s Golden Age. It tells the story of Jane Hewett, my great-great-great-grandmother and her eight adult children, who arrived in Port Phillip aboard the Culloden in 1850. According to the great-aunt who passed on their story, five of the eight Hewett children, including my great-great grandfather, married shipmates. The Culloden was a nineteenth century love-boat!

In reconstructing the story of Jane Hewett, her family and fellow voyagers, I have found myself thinking more broadly about the influence of homeland origins, migration, economic fortune and religion on family tradition. I have become more aware of the enormous research potential of the digitised resources available through sites like Ancestry.com. But the relationship between family history and academic history is, or ought to be, more than a marriage of convenience. It raises old, unfashionable questions about heredity and
environment, legacies and life-chances. If family history is an answer to the question ‘Who do you think you are?’ what does it contribute to the broader history of nations and societies? And they to it?

**May 1** Agnieszka Sobocinska (Monash University), *Development volunteering programs and the making of the Third World*

This paper will examine the rise of overseas volunteering programs that sent Western youth to ‘underdeveloped’ nations. The Volunteer Graduate Scheme was established in Australia in 1951, Voluntary Service Overseas in Britain in 1958, and the Peace Corps in the United States in 1961. These programs brought the public into the sphere of foreign aid and international development; in doing so they attracted a vast swathe of publicity and provoked widespread debate. In this paper, I will investigate the origins and varying aims of these three programs, and explore their role in shaping public assumptions about foreign aid and the nature of the ‘Third World’ world at a critical historical juncture when these concepts took on a new importance in global politics.

**May 8** Jessie Birkett-Rees (Monash University), *The archaeology of Anzac*

The Gallipoli peninsula is a dramatic setting for the meeting of geography, history and archaeology. This paper presents the results of archaeological fieldwork in the Anzac battlefields at Gallipoli. In the years leading up to 2015, the centenary of the First World War battles at Gallipoli, a team of historians and archaeologists returned to the peninsula to examine the archaeological record of the battlefields and unite this new material evidence with the history of the campaign. The Joint Historical and Archaeological Survey (JHAS) is a tri-nation project between Turkey, Australia and New Zealand that operates within the Anzac Area, demarcated by boundaries imposed in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). It is a multinational, interdisciplinary research project, working in a landscape of international cultural significance that has been closed to archaeologists for almost a century. Using modern archaeological approaches and technologies, united with historical documents from the First World War era, we have investigated the formation, preservation and conservation of the material record in this landscape of conflict. This presentation highlights not only the achievements of the project, but the capacity for original research brought about by the integration of archaeology, history and geospatial science.

**May 22** Peter Borschberg (National University of Singapore), *Visions of Empire: Hugo Grotius and Dutch Colonial Policies in Asia*

This paper builds on two recent books, *Hugo Grotius, the Portuguese and Free Trade in the East Indies* (2011) and *Journal, Memorials and Letters of Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge* (2015). It considers what role the renowned legal scholar, Hugo Grotius, played in shaping Dutch East India Company colonial policies in Asia. In particular, I examine whether he should be seen as little more than the right hand of the Dutch East India Company’s Directors, or whether he possessed his own distinctive vision of empire. The paper also considers the nature of the sources that shaped Grotius’ early views on the geopolitics and trading opportunities in Southeast Asia at the dawn of the 17th century with particular focus on the documents produced by Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge.
May 29 Atina Grossman (Cooper Union), *Remapping Survival: Jewish Refugees and Lost Memories of Displacement, Trauma, and Rescue in the Soviet Union, Iran, and India*

The paper addresses a transnational Holocaust story that remarkably—despite several decades of intensive scholarly and public attention to the history and memory of the Shoah—has remained essentially untold, marginalized in both historiography and commemoration. The majority of the c. 250,000 Jews who constituted the ‘saved remnant’ (*She’erit Hapleta*) of East European Jewry gathered in Allied Displaced Persons camps survived because they had been ‘deported to life’ in the Soviet Union. Moreover, Iran became a central site for Jewish relief efforts as well as a crucial transit stop for the Polish Army in Exile and the ‘Teheran Children’ on their way to Palestine; Jewish refugees, both allied and ‘enemy alien,’ were also a significant presence in British India, in internment camps, orphanages, and the Jewish Relief Association of Bombay. The paper seeks to integrate these largely unexamined experiences and lost memories of displacement and trauma into our understanding of the Shoah, and to remap the landscape of persecution, survival, relief and rescue during and after World War II. It asks how this ‘Asiatic’ experience shaped definitions (and self-definitions) as ‘survivors,’ in the immediate postwar context of displacement and up to the present globalization of Holocaust and post-colonial memory, including a very recent ‘boomlet’ of narratives (electronic and hard-copy publications, re-publications, and translations into English) about ‘surviving the Holocaust’ in the Soviet Union.

* no seminar on March 6 or May 15 due to History staff meetings

Convenor: Charlotte Greenhalgh
99024329, charlotte.greenhalgh@monash.edu