Reading the land: the mark in post colonial landscape

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READING THE LAND

THE MARK IN POST COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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Faculty of Creative Arts
1999
I, Marilyn Walters, certify that this thesis and the studio work submitted for examination in the exhibition Reading the Land at the Project Centre for Contemporary Art, Wollongong, in October/November, 1998, is my own work, and that it has not been previously submitted for examination for any other degree at Wollongong University, or any other similar institution.

Signed.  Date.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT:

Dr. Diana Wood-Conroy, Faculty of Creative Arts, Wollongong University
Dr. Mauris O'Sullivan, University College, Dublin.
Mr. John Clegg and Mr. Robert Hudson, Department of Archaeology, Sydney University
Prof. Des Crawley, Assoc. Prof. John O'Hara, Mr. Michael Keighery and Mr. Glenn Porter, Department of Visual and Media Arts, University of Western Sydney.
Lisa and David from Project Centre for Contemporary Art, Wollongong.
Special thanks to Mair and Dick Rees for their hospitality and encouragement and especially to Mair for her great interest, informed guidance and wonderful organization.
Thanks also to Mr. Wynn Rees for his friendship, generosity and intrepid guided tours.
Finally, thank you to my long-suffering family, George, William and Christopher.
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READING THE LAND
THE MARK IN POSTCOLONIAL LANDSCAPE

ABSTRACT

The marking of the landscape is an expression of desire, an indication of the development of a significant relationship between the marker and the land. This relationship may take the form of clearing the land and establishing boundaries synonymous with colonization or a ritual marking of the land in commemoration of the life cycle, carving a tomb or shelter, building fortifications or simply carving a name in a rock ledge. The reading of marks made by people on the surface of the land reveals successive positioning of individuals and whole cultures within the landscape and unravels to an extent, the history of human desire invested in place.

In contemporary arts practice the landscape and the markings and manipulations it reveals have provided a point of contact for artists concerned with re-establishing their own histories and with gaining a greater understanding of the first relationship in any historical sequence, that between human beings and the natural world.

My thesis and my studio work examine these needs and desires, to know the land, and to sense a past, which can give meaning to a personal process of growth. Through an investigation of the processes of marking, measuring and describing the land, in documenting land markings in my immediate environment of Iron Cove, Sydney, and in experiencing the landscape of my ancestors, in the Boyne Valley, Ireland, I engage with issues of personal identity, the appropriation of the past, and the expression of these concerns in contemporary art practice.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis interrogates systems of land markings employed by Anglo-Celtic cultures, in particular, those found in Iron Age Britain and Ireland and in colonial Australia, in order to reveal their relationship to contemporary arts practice.

This study examines the historic and aesthetic resonances evoked by the marking of the land in two specific sites, Iron Cove in Sydney's inner west, New South Wales, and, the Boyne Valley in County Meath, Ireland, forty miles north west of Dublin. These two sites are drawn together in my art practice primarily through land markings which appear in them, their proximity to and association with water and fortifications, and secondly, through my personal association with both places. Dublin was the birthplace of my convict ancestor and Iron Cove is the landscape in which I now live.

I am particularly interested in the mark as cultural memory, as the visible record of how successive cultures have positioned themselves in relation to the land. This interest is personalised in my studio work and its emphasis upon the development of an individual sense of history, identity and place.


Chapter two examines the importance of measurement as a system of marking in colonial Australia as a means by which European emigrants positioned themselves within an alien
environment. This examination provides the framework for an investigation of the Iron Cove site, located on the southern shores of the lower Parramatta River between the suburbs of Leichhardt, Haberfield, Drummoyne and Russell Lea. This piece of landscape has extensive markings including those of indigenous occupation together with a nineteenth century Anglo-Celtic burial tomb, the ruins of a nineteenth century garden, and some thirty-five exotic rock engravings (Clegg: 1994).

Between Balmain Road and the shores of Iron Cove we find the remnants of nineteenth century landscaped gardens, regarded in their time as excellent examples of a colonial Picturesque (Powell:1986, Leong: 1984). Originally the grounds of two colonial estates, the gardens were later incorporated into the complex of Psychiatric Asylums, which included Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic and Callan Park Psychiatric Hospital.

The series of carvings on the sandstone outcrop along the shore line directly below the Kirkbride buildings (once part of Callan Park Psychiatric Hospital, now housing Sydney College of the Arts) combine indigenous carvings with extensive unauthored engravings (Clegg: 1994:5). Middens nearby confirm indigenous presence in the area prior to white settlement (Clegg: 1996:Survey Map).

On the hill behind the rock carvings the original home of the site, Gary Owen House, built by Irishman John Ryan Brenan, still stands.

Two kilometres by water to the west of the rock carvings is a nineteenth century convict built tomb, once the burial place of ten members of the Rodd family (Plaque on site). The tomb is marked by a huge sandstone cross carved from a single stone “by means of a pick” (Russell: 1982:88). These carvings, monuments and land markings are part of the landscape which I traverse regularly, the yawning tomb and its giant cross, I see everyday from my front door.

My engagement with Iron Cove began when I moved to this area in 1988. My investigation of the rock engravings, earthworks and architecture of the site have played a significant role in my studio work. Through the markings I found within this site I
developed a fascination with land marking systems and the relationship which people
develop with place and land through the act of marking.

I have carried out a full photographic documentation of the carvings at Iron Cove
(Appendix 1) and these exotic markings have been the basis of four exhibitions of drawings
and paintings as well as written research over the past ten years.

Chapter Three examines the function of the mark in the landscape within a system of
Picturesque measurement. The orchestration of the landscape of Iron Cove into a nineteenth
century landscaped garden in the English tradition, (Leong: 1984, Powell: 1986) is
examined within the framework of a discussion of the Picturesque both in Europe
(Bisgrove: 1990, Pugh: 1990), and in colonial Australia (Carter: 1988, Gibson: 1992). In
this context, the study of the gardens at Callan Park, Iron Cove, reveals the mechanisms of
cultural insertion through the imposition of a Picturesque frame.

Two quite different readings of the land at Iron Cove are revealed in Chapters two and
three, one a speculative reading of the unauthored exotic engraved marks, the other reveals
a systematic measuring designed to render the colonial landscape in the likeness of a more
familiar European model. The co-existence of conscious and unconscious systems of
markings in the Iron Cove landscape opens up another multi-layered reading of the period,
involving a hybridity of influences.

Chapter Four investigates the second site in this study, the Boyne Valley in County Meath,
Ireland. This investigation was carried out within the framework of an "ancestral journey"
to Britain and Ireland in 1996. This journey was undertaken partly to visit and to experience
the landscape of Ireland from which my convict ancestor, Margaret Boyle, was transported
in 1824, and partly, to study examples of carved stones and field monuments which remain
in the landscape of Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England as evidence of the material and
spiritual practices of what I might claim as an ancestral culture.

The Boyne Valley site is considerably larger than that of Iron Cove and in fact takes in two
areas which, although some twenty kilometres apart, are linked by their proximity to the
Boyne River and by the history and mythology associated with them. On a ridge of hills
overlooking the Boyne are found three burial sites dating from c.2500BC at Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange (Harbison: 1994:66-82). All three feature passage tombs and elaborate rock carvings both in the tomb interiors and in the surrounding kerbstones (Harbison: 1994: 66-82, O’Sullivan: 1993:14-25).


In visiting the Boyne Valley I sought to develop a relationship with the landscape of my ancestors and to experience this landscape through the marking systems which appear in it.

There are significant similarities between these two sites. The Boyne Valley, like Iron Cove is bordered by the waters of an important river, and like the Iron Cove site, it contains burial chambers, carvings and monumental commemorative stones. The carvings in both sites are unauthored and mysterious and both landscapes contain the remnants of fortifications, in the Boyne Valley earthworks and in the asylum walls of Callan Park Psychiatric Hospital in Iron Cove.

The presence of tombs and water on both sites evoke associations with transitions from one state to another, of migration and the passage to “Otherworlds” by water. Furthermore, the resonances associated with asylum walls, fortifications and with water are echoed in the lives of my convict ancestors; in their Celtic origins and their forced migration to New South Wales. Just as “lunatics” were transported by water to the asylum of Callan Park, so too my convict ancestor and her two infant children were transported by water to the penal settlement of New South Wales. The ruins of the ringed fortifications at Tara are echoed in the circular forms of the derelict sunken gardens, and the stone walls, which still surround Callan Park.

The rituals of my rural childhood in New South Wales were also given further meaning through re-positioning myself within the ancestral landscape where these rituals began.
Chapter Five contextualizes my research concerns with my studio work. My interest in the marking of the lands’ surface as an expression of the positioning of people within the landscape and the longing for a strong association with a specific place, are central to my practice. I am also particularly concerned with how a place which has received the marks of human interaction is experienced now, and how it might have been experienced at the time of its marking. The ritual processes of mark making are considered in relation to both the marks in the Boyne valley tombs, and the marks I make in my paintings. I am also interested in what the marking of the landscape can tell us about the possible past and its relevance in our present.

Similarly, the associations and resonances between Iron Cove and my ancestral landscape of Ireland, have become a central motif in my arts practice and in the construction of a sense of personal identity. My involvement with these two landscapes has been circular, beginning with a growing fascination with my immediate landscape on the shores of Iron Cove, and moving to direct contact with the ancient landscape of Ireland, then back to a re-examination of Iron Cove. In visiting the landscape from which my convict ancestor and her two infant children were deported I completed the missing half of her journey: the return. And in returning to the landscape to which she was sent, my own circular journey was completed. This circular journey has brought to the foreground a sense of personal history and at the same time heightened awareness of the nature of displacement which is a consequence of relocation from one landscape to another, if indeed from a distance of two hundred years. There are parallels between my search for identity and a sense of place, with the searchings of contemporary Aboriginal artists, like Judy Watson (Walters: 1997) and Gordon Bennett (McLean: 1996) who endeavour through their work to re-position themselves in relation to the past.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The thesis is important firstly, because the research carried out on the Iron Cove site provides the basis for a number of different interpretations of these markings. This research will be a valuable addition to the small body of scholarship centred on this
particular site, and will also broaden the reader's understanding and interpretation of rock engravings, which tend to be seen as “other” to Anglo-Celtic culture.

Furthermore, these two seemingly disparate pieces of landscape have been chosen for study because of their physicality, their location and appearance, but also because their significance in my own migratory history is, at the same time, representative of the quandary of Anglo-Celtic descendants living in contemporary Australia, a country which is simultaneously ancient and new (Gibson: 1992) and a country in which they have no ancestral presence.

This absence of ancestral grounding in the land of Australia accounts for the difficulty experienced by Anglo-Celtic Australians in positioning themselves within the landscape of this country. As Ross Gibson has pointed out, it is a new world dilemma to live in a country which has a history of occupation in excess of seventy thousand years, of which your own cultural occupation has been a mere two centuries. This dilemma gives rise to a form of “national introspection” (Gibson: 1992:11) which becomes embedded in the way white Australians, in particular, express their relationship to this land.

My personal investigations of the landscapes of Iron Cove and the Boyne Valley are also an expression of the sense of loss and longing, and of aesthetic displacement and confusion which underpins much of the preoccupation with land and landscape in the psyche of Australia.

The investigation of the Irish landscape is important because it positions the self in relationship to an ancestral culture, extends artistic dimensions and definitions, and extends understanding of the relationship between land and culture which is deeply contested in current thinking (Schama: 1996, Carter: 1996, McLean: 1998). Furthermore, the thesis enlarges the reader’s understanding of the interrelation of land and land markings in the history of cultural insertion in Australia.

Finally, this thesis offers a further investigation of the influence of the distant as well as the colonial past in contemporary art practice. In my individual art practice the marks and symbols of an ancestral culture are re-formatted and re-presented in a post-modern context.
which affords a new reading both of the symbols themselves and of their role in the construction of identity in contemporary Australia.

SOURCES

PRIMARY RESEARCH

A large section of this thesis involved the documentation of the Iron Cove site. This research was carried out using the archaeological processes of description of material evidence. This documentation appears as Appendix One.

The documentation of the Iron Cove carvings was carried out over two periods of two weeks duration, the first in September, 1996 and the second in October, 1998 when I was assisted by Glen Porter, of the Department of Visual and Media Arts, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. During these two periods I photographed, measured and wrote a brief description of each of the carvings.

My documentation also took account of previous findings, in particular those of John Clegg, Department of Archaeology, Sydney University.

In 1996 I undertook a six-week study tour of prehistoric sites and collections in Britain and Ireland. These included:

Hill forts, settlements and collections of stones at Llantwit and Merthyr Mair, and Castell Henllys, South Wales

Petre Iffan, dolmen, South Wales

Ogham stones and High Cross at Nevern, South Wales and Carew High Cross.

Iron Age fortifications at Din Lliguy and Tre Cieri, Anglesey

Burial mounds at Bryn Celli Ddu and Barclodiad - y - Gawres, Anglesey
Megalithic tombs in the Boyne Valley, County Meath, Ireland

Tara, Iron Age Fort and burial site, County Meath, Ireland.

Megalithic Dolmen, Fermoy, County Cork

Lismore Castle and fort, County Cork.

Collection of Ogham stones, University College, Cork.

Kells monastic settlement in County Meath and High Crosses at Moone and Aheny Country Kildare.

Melifont Abbey and Monasterboice, County Louth, Ireland

Pictish carved stones at Meigle, Aberlemno and Glamis Manse, and slab cross at Essie, Scotland.

Stonehenge and Avebury Bronze Age monuments, Wiltshire

Romanesque carvings at Kilpeck Church, Herefordshire.

Earthworks at St. Catherine's Hill, Winchester, Kilpeck in Herefordshire and Maiden Castle in Dorset.

Collections studied included those of:

British Museum in London

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Winchester Museum

Gloscester Museum

National Museum of Ireland, Dublin

Trinity College, Dublin

University College, Cork

National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
National Gallery, Edinburgh

Pictish Stones collections at Meigle, Scotland

I photographed and made extensive drawings and notes at these sites and collections. This data was sifted very thoroughly to arrive at a small number of resonant images for the purposes of this study.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Sources include convict records, early Sydney records, photographic files and newspapers accessed at Mitchell Library and the State Library of New South Wales. Local history records and research at the Leichhardt, Drummoyne and Burwood Libraries, The Richmond River Historical Society, and the Broughton Hall Research Centre Library provided substantial material.

Art historical methodology was employed in the description and analysis of colonial artists’ responses to the alien environment of New South Wales through selected images from the first twenty five years of European settlement, and also in the discussion of the Picturesque both in the landscaped gardens of Callian Park, and in the framing of the discussion of European cultural insertion into the landscape of Australia.

Art journals, exhibition catalogues and monographs were obtained from the Art Gallery of New South Wales Library, National Gallery Library, Canberra, Wollongong University Library, Fisher Library and Power Library, University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney Library, Mitchell Library and the Canberra School of Art Library.

Background research surrounding the centenary of the Wynne Prize for landscape painting culminated in the curatorship of an exhibition at Campbelltown Gallery in 1997. This exhibition featured work from a number of artists involved with land and land markings, cultural insertion and identity, in particular, Judy Watson, Gordon Bennett, Mandy Martin, Jenny Sages, Geoff Levitus and Guy Warren.

The framing and discussion of my studio work also required a degree of autobiographical writing as well as the predominantly art historical methodology of situating my practice beside that of other artists whose concerns have been similar to my own.

**STUDIO RESEARCH**

In addition to this academic research, I have used the carvings of Iron Cove as subject matter and research in my studio practice over the past ten years. This research began with drawings and photography in the area, which formed the basis of two exhibitions at Drummoyne Gallery in 1989 and 1990. In 1991, the carvings were also the inspiration for the first series of mixed media works entitled Fragments of a History of Iron Cove, exhibited at Sydney College of the Arts; The Works Gallery, College of Fine Arts, and Foyer Gallery, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. A second series of “Fragments” also based on the carvings of Iron Cove was exhibited at the Tin Sheds Gallery in January, 1993 and works from that series were exhibited at Silpakorn University, Bangkok in July, 1993. Between 1990 and 1993 I collected material from the foreshores of Iron Cove which included fragments of ceramics, brass, animal bones, seeds and shells which I used in the development of images. I also made clay impressions of the surface of the land and collected samples of ochres and mosses, all of which were used in mixed media works made over that period. The preoccupation with rock carvings both at Iron Cove and in the landscapes of Britain and Ireland was the basis of an exhibition of paintings and drawings at Spiral Arm Gallery, Canberra in 1995. Drawings and photographs made on site in Britain and Ireland and in the National Museum of Ireland, British Museum and National Museum of Wales were used in the development of imagery in my doctoral exhibition *Reading the Land*, at the Project Centre for Contemporary Art, October, 1998.
CHAPTER ONE

MARKING, NAMING AND MEASUREMENT

This chapter discusses different ways of marking the land and the meanings which can be extracted from the marks made. In particular, examples will be drawn from the landscapes of ancient Britain and Ireland, and from colonial Australia. Attention will be focused on the function of the mark in the reading of landscapes, as well as the preoccupation with the mark on the landscape in the context of contemporary art practice.

The marking of the land’s surface as an expressive element was first brought to my attention through the mysterious carvings found in my own landscape at Iron Cove, Sydney. From Iron Cove my interest in the marking of the land spread to the landscape of ancient Britain and in particular, to the Boyne Valley, Ireland, my ancestral landscape. My involvement with both these landscapes revealed curious similarities and resonances between the two.

The marking of the landscape is an important element in both these sites. At Iron Cove, in New South Wales (UBD: 1995:234-235), rock engravings of fish testify to the once abundant food sources in the area, while images of sailing ships and steamers record the intrusion of European cultures and the development of water traffic and commerce. Letters, dates and other nautical references and symbols carved into the surface of the sandstone along the water’s edge give expression to the needs, desires and positioning of previous occupants.

Also at the Iron Cove site traces of the elaborate manipulation of the landscape to form a garden in the nineteenth century European Picturesque manner remains as evidence of large-scale markings of the land. These markings were designed to familiarize and make readable and governable, an unfamiliar and untamed landscape and to provide a sense of well being for the people confined within it (Leong: 84:35).
Similarly, as Thomas indicates in relation to the Newgrange site, the symbols and patterns which appear in the Iron Age tomb carvings found in the Boyne Valley, County Meath, Ireland, resonate with the presence of the carvers, their beliefs, needs and desires. These abstract patterns and sequences of repeated motifs have been variously interpreted as calendars (Thomas: 1988:54,55) religious symbols (Harbison: 1994:77) or indeed some, as anthropomorphic figures (Harbison: 1994:81), possibly representative of the Great Goddess (O’Sullivan: 1993:70).

The rock carvings in Iron Cove like those in the Boyne Valley are unauthored. We do not know for sure who made these marks or why, which leaves us to ponder the potency of the marks themselves. As Lippard points out, a very strong element of the attraction of unauthored marks such as these is precisely their mystery (Lippard: 1983:11). The absence of definitive attribution allows us to speculate upon the ambience and ritual of societies of the past, whom we imagine lived in closer spiritual harmony with their environment and each other than we do.

On the other hand, the Picturesque manipulation of the landscape as is evident in the ruined gardens of Callan Park, Iron Cove, represents a rather more complex yet accessible marking of the landscape. The Callan Park gardens do have a history and a number of “authors” whose raison d’être can be traced through the marks which remain. That the Iron Cove landscape should also receive the marks of a Picturesque insertion of European sensibility adds a further layering of meaning to the interaction of people and the land in this place. The examination of the Picturesque as a system of familiarizing the landscape of colonial Australia is discussed in Chapter Three.

Whether it is intended as an aid to navigation or cultivation, a decoration, the exercise of ritual or memorial, or a claim to ownership, the making of a mark upon the land is much more than the simple act it may first appear. In attempting to interpret the mark upon the landscape, we bring with us our own set of needs and desires so that the meanings we extract from marks found in and on the landscape may differ considerably. Our lack of shared beliefs and values contributes to our fascination with ancient images, as Lucy Lippard observed in her influential book, Overlay (Lippard: 1983:11). This fascination also applies to more contemporary marks which we encounter outside of the agreed boundaries
of social practice, such as those found at Iron Cove.

**MARKING THE LAND**

The mark made on the landscape is the primary interpretive device through which people position themselves to the natural world. Once the mark is made on the landscape a relationship between the marker and that particular piece of land is established. The making of the mark upon the land proclaims both the separation of culture from nature and the point at which they conjoin so that the mark made on the land's surface is therefore, the first act of cultural insertion. When stones are gathered into a cairn or a wall, or a pole is driven into the ground, a symbol carved on a rock, or a plough drawn across the land, an act of cultural insertion has been performed. This crucial interaction between culture and nature is at the very heart of collective societies, and continues to occupy our attention in contemporary art and daily life. As Lucy Lippard has emphasised:-

Speculation about the close relationship between nature and culture in prehistory is not starry-eyed idealism, nor is it ahistorical fantasizing about a Golden Age. People living between earth and sky, with few human made distractions, had to be far closer to natural forces and phenomena than people living on our crowded planet now. Obviously we do not relate to nature in the same way, but the reestablishment of a coherent relationship between nature and culture is a crucial element in any progressive view of the future (Lippard: 1983:12).

Furthermore, whilst the marking of the land reveals the efforts of people to render the land readable, governable and capable of sustaining continuing human occupation, systems of markings and orderings of the landscape also provide a visual history of the passage of people through the natural world. The nature of the marks they make describe their relationship to the land. For example, the mark made by the surveyor describes a particular relationship with the land. When the surveyor drives home the peg, the relationship of ownership over the land is described in that action. When we mark the land in this manner, we mark out our relationship with it for others to see and respect. The mark of the surveyor not only proclaims the presence of the marker but the possession of the land. This mark
suggests not merely a presence within the landscape, but some form of permanent occupation of the site. The mark of the surveyor is one which signifies how the land is to be traversed, how it is to be lived in and how it will be henceforth described and known (Connah: 1988).

The ordering and orchestration of the natural environment provides indicators of cultural infrastructure, of national aspiration and personal identity as well as evidence of aesthetic and poetic responses to place.

The marking of the landscape occurs in layers and each layer represents the further positioning of culture within and upon the land’s surface. The overlayering of one system of marking over another describes the maturation of material cultures and the domination of certain cultural practices or invading cultures over others. Roman built roads across Britain for instance, often overlay the ancient leys or paths, which were marked by alignments of stones, pools and tumuli (Watkins: 1983: 9,20,39,95). Similarly, in New South Wales, the carvings left by indigenous artists in the sandstone ledges of the Sydney basin, have been overlaid in many instances by the grid of suburban settlement. In a suburban front garden in Beacon Hill a site once displaying seventy five engravings is now over-marked by a herbaceous border which conceals a sewerage trench (Stanbury & Clegg: 1996:33) and, in Point Piper, an engraving of a large fish is “preserved” under the false floor of a garage (Stanbury & Clegg: 1996:26).

This is not to suggest that the land is merely always the passive receiver of cultural insertion. Great tracts of land because of their impenetrability, remain largely free of the marks of cultural intervention and these lands we treasure as “wilderness” areas, the last reminders of the natural world. The fact that controversy arises over attempts to invade wilderness areas for mining, logging or farming operations is evidence of our conflicting ideas about the capacity of the natural world to endure the imposition of culture, and of the rights of cultures to impose themselves upon nature. The development of “wilderness” is a thesis topic in itself. George Seddon for instance argues that "wilderness is an artefact", a product of "ecospeak" which refers to a constructed or defined area of landscape so designated for the purposes of "privileged recreation"( Seddon: 1997:22-23).
However, for the purposes of this discussion the wilderness is defined by its lack of human
markings and therefore its perceived spirituality, purity and proximity to God. For most of us, the wilderness represents a reserve, not only of unmarked land and "natural resources", but of spiritual attachment, and it is the latter which, if lost, cannot be regained, a point made forcefully by Barbara Novak in her discussion of nineteenth century American attitudes in her 1979 book *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century. Realism, Idealism and the American Experience* (Novak: 1979:22-23,92-100) and reiterated by Robert Hughes in the television series and book *American Visions. The Epic History of American Art*, of 1997. George Seddon may be correct in his definition of a constructed wilderness today but I would argue that our attitudes towards the "untouched" wilderness landscape is still largely one of nostalgic reverence, not dissimilar to that expressed by our nineteenth century counterparts.ii

The land is the repository of many ideas; frameworks for human interaction, notions of beauty, expressions of need. Indeed as George Seddon points out, the marking of the land is what transforms it into landscape. An environment becomes a landscape only when it is so regarded by people, and especially when they begin to shape it in accord with their taste and needs. (Seddon: 1997:111)

The relationship between people and the land they traverse and inhabit is a complex and intimate one. At the same time as we mark and shape the land in accord with our needs, existing landforms are often given human or supernatural properties and names such as Lake Disappointment, Mount Warning, The Devil’s Marbles, The Three Sisters and so on. These names are not necessarily descriptive and certainly not scientific but rather, express forms of human experience of the landscape, in particular that of travelling through it, (Carter: 1988:2-6, Seddon: 1997:23-26) and are intended to provoke some sense or spirit of the place, as well as a means of identifying the landform for subsequent travellers.

Simon Schama argues that indeed, landscapes are culture before they are nature, constructs of the imagination projected onto wood, water and rock. (Schama: 1996:61) Rock, wood or water becomes the tangible expression of an idea we have about ourselves. Indeed, as Schama points out, so many of our modern concerns - empire, nation, freedom, enterprise, and dictatorship - have evoked topography to give their ruling ideas a natural form (Schama: 1996:17). The construction of the Australian “bush”, is as much a poetic
form as an actual landscape as George Seddon has pointed out (Seddon: 1997:21-22).

Indeed, for the painter Frederick McCubbin, in describing Arthur Streeton's painting, *The Purple Noons Transparent Might*, the "bush" landscape functioned as an expression of "the strength, beauty and possibility of Australia" (Burn: 1991:40). Streeton's depiction of the bush landscape came to represent the visual construction of a new culture in the making.

As well as the representation of landscape as idea within the framework of the picturesque painting, the marks left on the surface of the land can also be read as ideas; visual expressions of territory, origin, belief and individual consciousness. The marking of the land can take a great many different and diverse forms in response to diverse cultural impulses. The landscape of Iron Cove where mysterious and unauthored carvings co-exist with picturesque landscaping, is a microcosm of this diversity. Whatever the motivation for the act of marking, the place which has been marked subsequently has meaning within an extended pattern of association which may reach well beyond that place, both physically and temporally. The mark proclaims the presence of the marker and establishes that presence in time and space.

Even the unconscious marking of the land which takes place when we walk over it, is, as expressed by Richard Long, "just one more layer, a mark, laid upon thousands of other layers of human and geographic history on the surface of the land" (Lippard: 1983:129).

**ANCIENT MARKINGS**

The mark in the landscape is the tangible link between past and present, and between past and present mark makers. The Ogham marks - an ancient Celtic grooved writing - found on standing stones throughout Ireland for instance, have been re-positioned in the commemorative art of the Irish Memorial in Sydney's Waverley Cemetery. (Plt.2)

The revival of the ancient Ogham language in this context, is a potent political gesture, which proclaims the continuity of Irish culture in the face of British intervention.

In Britain and Ireland the land's surface has received the markings of sacred ceremony and
Plate. 2. Irish Memorial, Waverley (above). Detail of Irish Memorial, Waverley with Ogham writing (below).
of territorial fortification, of secular ritual, of celebration and commemoration as well as those of the hoe and the plough. The actions of the artist/scribe/farmer in marking the land have produced some of the great and mysterious images of the ancient world, such as the Giant of Cerne Abbas carved into the Dorset hillside (Plt.3) (Lippard: 1983:220) and the White Horse of Uffington (Lippard: 1983:137) or indeed the extraordinary earthworks of Maiden Castle (Lippard: 1983:24).

The forms of ancient ring forts such as Maiden Castle in Dorset, Navan Fort, in County Armagh (Harbison: 1994:156) or Tara, County Meath (Harbison: 1994:190) are clearly visible some five thousand years after their construction, testimony to the scale and industry of the communities they held. What is also of great interest to me in looking at marks upon the landscape is that these earthworks are not buildings as such but rather massive carvings on the earth’s surface. They are unquestionably deliberate and purposeful, their fortified boundaries marking the seat of power of the chieftain and their scale and intricacy intimating the extent of that power.

As well as establishing the relationship between individual markers and the land, the arrangement of ancient marks can orchestrate the landscape and direct the procession of others through it in particular ways, as Julian Thomas observes in his study of the passage tombs in the Boyne Valley, Ireland. At Knowth, writes Thomas:

...where the kerbstones surrounding the mound become larger and more ornately decorated in the areas about the entrances to the passages, the journey from the outside world into the chamber space is a highly orchestrated one, in which the individual is constantly being made aware that he or she is passing between radically different spaces. (Thomas: 1990:175)
In Britain and Ireland, the carving and notching of great stones and the construction of stone and wooden henges are also forms of marking the landscape which remain as remnants of past cultural practices and ancient languages. Likewise the scale, detail and carved decoration of ancient tombs such as those at Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange in the Boyne Valley, not only reveal the burial practices of ancient people but the elaborate markings found in these places testify to the importance of the deceased person and to a firm belief in an afterlife. (See Plate 5).

Often little is really known about the ancient peoples who produced these markings, but in their forms we can glimpse the remnants of social structures from which we construct our own past.

The real significance of these markings is manifest in our contemporary preoccupation and fascination with them. It is through these ancient marks that we make contact with the past and through their appropriation that we fulfil a longing for an imagined past in which the relationship of art and social life was more connected, more symbiotic, more meaningful (Lippard: 1983:10-11, Stewart: 1998:139-145). To confront these ancient markings is to confront the Other which is also myself.

**COLONIAL AUSTRALIA.**

For the first European settlers to set foot on the sandy mud flats of Port Jackson, the marking of the land was immediate and purposeful, as this entry from Watkin Tench’s journal indicates.

Port Jackson, 1788

The landing of part of the marines and convicts took place the next day, and on the following the remainder was disembarked. Business now sat on every brow and the scene, to an indifferent spectator at leisure to contemplate it, would have been highly picturesque and amusing. In one place a party cutting down the woods; a second setting up a blacksmith’s forge, a third dragging along a load of stones or provisions; here an
officer pitching his marquee, with a detachment of troops parading on one side of him, and a cook’s fire blazing up on the other (Tench: 1998:44).

Watkin Tench’s account of the disembarkation of marines and convicts at Port Jackson conjures a picture of furious land marking activities including the cutting of wood, the driving of tent poles, the dragging of stones and the stamping of feet, all of which are orchestrated towards the establishment of a “system” (ibid.) of occupation. On their first encounter with the Aboriginal inhabitants, the intention of the invaders to take possession of the land is demonstrated by the drawing of a boundary on the sand (Tench: 1998:45).

Each of the activities described by Tench illustrates a significant marking of the landscape, which combined the needs of individual markers with the collective need to impose the new order upon the land. The cutting of the undergrowth and woods provided fuel but more importantly, it created cleared space, which could then receive the marks of an English social system. The clearing of the land made room for the marking out of private spaces in which to “pitch a marquee”, or to set up a blacksmith’s forge. The dragging of stones across the land suggests a central point of collection. At such a point the stone becomes building material to be used in the construction of more permanent structures, making secure the objects of power, provisions and arms. The pounding of parading feet is another form of leveling the land, and of imposing order and “regularity” upon it (Carter: 1996:6-10).

For the marines and convicts at Port Jackson, the establishment of systems and boundaries was vital to their survival, both physically and psychologically, in an alien landscape. For each member of the First Fleet the marking of the land in New South Wales was synonymous with imposing familiar, readable markings upon the alien, unfamiliar surface.

For the descendants of these reluctant invaders, successive markings of the landscape described the transition from the alien to the familiar. For example, an account of road building in the colony cited by Eric Russell (Russell: 1982:43-44) describes three phases of clearing and levelling the landscape to form a road, from firstly:
Plate 4. Work of Nicholas Lang in Biennale of Sydney, 1988

PETER IN THE SKY — DEDICATED TO PUTTAPA BOB,
UNCLE BERT AND GARY FOLEY — IMAGINARY FIGURATIONS NO 6, 1987
Cross-section of 'coloured sands' deposits (calico, glue on stick framework), Maslin Sand Quarry
210 x 340 x 28

OCHRE AND SAND: DEDICATED TO THE
VANISHED TRIBES OF THE FLINDERS RANGE AND ADELAIDE AREA, 1987
Ochre and sand displayed on paper
6 x 600 x 504

(Photo) Grant Hancock
“chipping the bark off the trees in a direct compass line”, “clearing away the bushy parts” and “bridging or lowering the banks of streams and gullies”, to “stump(ing) out all the trees in the line” and filling the holes, to the final step of “Macadamizing.”

In this description of European colonial road building techniques, we see the layering of successive marks, which in time, transform the landscape in the service of the invading culture.

In marking the land, the needs of European colonial society were expressed, particularly the need for sustenance, shelter and protection from the forces of the natural world. Through the gradual punctuating of the landscape in this manner, with fence and furrow, road and clearing, garden and town, the process of colonization took visual form.

The complicity of the European Picturesque as a language, a style and a system of marking and measurement in the process of familiarizing the colonized landscape, is discussed further in Chapter Three.

CONTEMPORARY PREOCCUPATIONS

The allure of ancient or unauthored marks in the landscape has prompted many twentieth century artists of the west to re-examine the art and ritual of prehistoric cultures. Lucy Lippard’s study of contemporary art and the art of pre-history examines many instances of the retracing of the rituals and patterns of ancient mark making which have arisen from this pre-occupation (Lippard: 1983). It is as if in re-tracing the ancient markings, contemporary artists seek to regain lost associations with the land, to re-create forgotten positionings and to re-invent relationships of scale and attitudes of reverence.

For example, English artist, Richard Long, extolled his students in 1967 to “look the ground in the eye” (Lippard: 1983:126) and in 1987 Daniel Thomas wrote of Canadian, Nikolaus Lang’s land based work that Lang:
“draws attention to the inextricable interconnectedness between the present and the past, even to the pre-historic human past” (Australian Biennale: 1988:174) (Plt.4).

In recent Australian landscape representation, a new sensibility to the landscape, arising from a re-examination of our colonial past, seeks a more intimate relationship with the land through understanding and aesthetic reconciliation.

Englishman John Wolseley, who has lived and worked in Australia for twenty years, has carried out a “mapping” of the Australian desert landscape. In Wolseley’s work, the marks observed blend with the notation of the artist/observer to construct a narrative of the land which is filled with wonder and reverence (McGrath and Olsen: 1981:66-71, Long: 1988).

Likewise, a reverence for the Australian desert landscape is also apparent in the work of contemporary Australian artist, Mandy Martin. Martin’s huge light filled canvases revive the "Sublime", a transcendent attitude to the land in response to the grandeur of creation. These paintings are not a celebration of the explorers romantic penetration of nature however, but rather, these “empty” desert images resonate with the silence of the unmarked landscape. The text which floats through the painting, Adagio, 1994, is a warning to would be intruders, Adagio, go slowly (Walters: 1997)

When life is experienced as a constant and seamless present, as it is in western societies of the late twentieth century, the reconstruction of an agrarian past functions as an anchor in the stream of postmodern consciousness. The appropriation of the past in contemporary art practice provides a sense of history, of growth and continuity, which counterbalances the global sameness of contemporary Western culture. In this context, the marking of the land gains an added importance as the primal action in the train of association between people, place and time (Lowenthal: 1988).

Writing about her work in Artlink, Australian artist, Marion Borgelt observed that:-

To be able to understand the development of various cultures and societies, a continuum is important, where yesterday is incorporated into today and the present becomes a distillation and sum total of the past, such that in the present we detect the evolution of
humankind through time.

If we can sense traces of our past then we know from where we have come and where we have arrived, giving meaning to the process of growth. (Artlink: 1998:26)

Interest in the preservation and restoration of ancient sites and indeed in the imitation of the cultural practices suggested by them, in contemporary art forms, reveals our concern with retaining this vital passage in our visual history which explains our links to and changing relationship with the land’s surface.

Simon Schama’s book, *Landscape and Memory*, is also a product of the contemporary preoccupation with the relationship which human beings form with the land they occupy, and with the possible readings of cultural history which can be made by observing the remaining evidence of these interactions including the marks made upon the land. This preoccupation is often accompanied by ecological concerns. In *Landscape and Memory*, Schama discusses some recent criticisms of intensive agriculture which site the breakdown of harmonious relationships between humanity and the earth’s surface as a consequence of the invention of the fixed-harnessed plow in the seventh century. The knife of the new implement “attacked the land” so that farming became ecological warfare. (Schama: 1996:13). Similarly George Seddon, in his book *Landprints*, 1998, implores the contemporary reader to “respect the landform”(Seddon: 1997:115), “respect the soil”, “respect the hydrology”, “respect the natural vegetation”(Op.cit.116).

**SUMMARY**

Whatever the nature of the mark, the act of marking the land is the dawning of a descriptive visual language through which human beings interact with and begin to comprehend the natural world.

Lucy Lippard in her book, *Overlay*, observes that:-

Art itself must have begun as nature, not as formalized representation of it, but simply as the perception of relationships between humans and the natural world (Lippard: 1983:4).
The marking of the land then, is the point of contact between humans and the land they inhabit. The nature of the mark describes the relationship of the marker to the landscape. The notched tree may suggest a path to be followed. The elaborately carved rock at the tomb's entrance distinguishes between different ceremonial spaces, while the surveyor's peg proclaims ownership, and the tear of the plough and the landscape gardener's mark signal the final dominance of culture over nature. Through landscape and the marks made upon it, human beings express complex ideas of self and nation, of spiritual and physical longing, of individual and collective identity.

In the marking of the landscape, human desire finds form. Robert Layton and Peter Sutton both accept the definition of rock art as "deliberate communication through visual forms" (Layton: 1992:1, Sutton: 1988:4). I would add that this "deliberate communication" also involves a desire to know the land and to be comfortable in relation to it, perhaps to exercise ownership and productive and aesthetic control over the land through marking it. These complex negotiations are all elements in the construction of personal and collective identity.

Furthermore, in regarding the marks of ancient cultures, such as those of Ireland, we attempt to extract meaning, to locate our own personal and cultural growth in the continuum of human history.
Plate 5. Newgrange Kerbstone. c.3500 BC
CHAPTER TWO
MEASURING THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

This chapter begins with an examination of the mark made in or on the surface of the land as the first point of measurement, in particular within the context of a colonial pre-occupation with locating the self within an alien environment. The initial mark becomes the point from which other measurements may be taken, measurements of time and space between this mark and the next or between this mark and the surrounding landscape. Systems of measurement developed in this way provide, for the marker, a passage both physical and visual, through the landscape.

This chapter also locates and investigates the Iron Cove site and examines the traces of land markings contained within its surface as indicative of the interaction of subsequent waves of occupants with the landscape of the developing Sydney region.

MEASUREMENT

Measurement is an important element in the visual language of marking, which manifests itself in the Western obsession with mapping. In mapping we have developed a system of locating ourselves through the measurement of distance between two marks. This system affords us the comfort of knowing where we are in the landscape.

This preoccupation with systems of measurement of the landscape is by no means recent. If Alfred Watkins was correct in his thesis, then the people of ancient Britain had developed a sophisticated system of measurement which was both practical and sacred (Lippard: 1983:134). In The Old Straight Track, published in 1925, Watkins details a system of straight tracks called leys, which were plotted across the country through an alignment of camps or tumuli, carved stones, stone circles, beacons, moats, wells, springs and causeways (Plt.11) (Watkins: 1983:36). These tracks, claimed Watkins, were not merely trading or transport routes, but sacred roads aligning significant monuments (Watkins: 1983:7,8).
For many years Watkins’ work was not taken seriously by archaeologists, mainly because Watkins was, like many before him, an enthusiastic amateur, and because his findings did not comply with current scholarship. However, the existence of leys, as Watkins originally defined them, has gained considerable credence with contemporary statistical surveys of the incidence of alignments among groups of megaliths, in various part of Britain. (Preface by John Michell in Watkins: 1983:7) (Lippard: 1983:133-138).

“Ley hunting” has become a popular pastime in contemporary Britain (Lippard: 1983:134) bringing people into contact with the landscape and raising their collective consciousness of history, folk lore and ecology, as well as helping them to read the land in new and more intimate ways.

Landscapes can be rendered familiar by the citing of “landmarks”, prominent natural points such as peculiarly shaped rocks or trees, elevations and depressions, mountains or waterways. These features mark the land for us and afford a point from which to measure distance and by which to locate ourselves. “Ten miles from Ryan’s crossing and five below the peak “ is the location Henry Lawson’s hero chooses in which to build “a little homestead”(Stone: 1978:268). This form of mapping is one which suggests an intimacy with the landscape and an acceptance of the land as accommodating and provident.

However, the landscape which greeted the first Europeans in Australia was not so immediately accommodating and without the development of systems of locating themselves within it, the fear of being forever lost was a constant and haunting presence.

CRUSOE’S FOOTPRINT

The significance of measurement in the process of colonization is discussed by Paul Carter in his introduction to The Lie of the Land, 1996. Carter takes the example of Robinson Crusoe and his paranoia when confronted with a single footprint in the sands of the island on which he had assumed he was alone. The absence of a second footprint throws Crusoe into a panic because the sequence of measurement cannot be followed, the direction of the
measurement cannot be determined. The single footprint confirms a presence in the landscape, but without a second similar marking, Crusoe cannot tell if the presence is his own or someone else's.

Carter speculates:

What would have happened if Crusoe had found another footprint? Then he would have found another and another, and a pattern would have emerged, a track. A system of memorialization would have come into focus, a different way of regarding the ground (Carter: 1996:12).

As Carter's example aptly illustrates, a single mark establishes not only the initial point of contact with the land but also the point of departure; the pointer towards the next mark in a sequence. A systematic marking of the landscape provides the necessary visual language by which it may be read. The first mark is the first point in the sequence.

Knowing where one was in the landscape was of particular importance to the first white settlers in New South Wales. Like Crusoe, they could not situate themselves within this new land without imposing some system of measurement.

Lieutenant William Bradley of HMS Sirius, recorded in his "Journal" many instances of his preoccupation with measurement in the new colony. Bradley is always at pains to locate himself as accurately as possible using the tools of measurement commensurate with his navigational training. Not surprisingly, he appears much more certain of his location when at sea than when he puts ashore. He plots his mooring firmly in Botany Bay as:

Pt. Solander SSE

Cape Banks ESE } in 8 fms. of water

(Bradley: 1969:58)

Like Crusoe, Bradley had some difficulty in locating himself in the unknown landscape that confronted him in New South Wales, and his descriptions of coves and beaches are often imprecise and vague. However, he is in no doubt of the location of the settlement at Farm
The Flag Staff at the Settlement 33:51 3/4 S and 151:20 E
Variation of the compass 10:30 E (Bradley: 1969:79)

Similarly, the need to distinguish points in the landscape in order to reliably locate himself in space, is apparent in the writing of Judge Advocate, David Collins. Collins recalled in his *Account of the English Colony of New South Wales*, his dread of the unmarked landscape of Port Jackson. He warns of the “extreme danger attendant on a man’s going beyond the bounds of his own knowledge of the forests” and confesses that the numerous coves and inlets of the harbour all looked the same to him.

From his “ease”, sitting in a boat with his companions, he was:

…struck with horror at the bare idea of being lost in them; as from the great similarity of one cove to another, the recollection would be bewildered in attempting to determine any relative situation.

It is certain that if destroyed by no other means, insanity would accelerate the miserable end that must ensue (Russell: 1982:8).

The absence of recognizable, sequential systems of markings in the landscape of Botany Bay and Port Jackson confirmed for British First Fleet immigrants, the concept of *terra nullius*.

As Ross Gibson has observed:

The Britons living in Governor Phillip’s Australia were confronted with what they construed to be “unwrought nature”. The continent could not be addressed and made sensible until it was incorporated into Culture. Indeed the comprehension of Australia as Nature was the principal action of its incorporation. The continent was called an empty page, and stories and systems were thus made ready to be set down on it. (Gibson: 1992:87-88).
To the first white emigrants, this “empty page” was indeed empty because it was empty of them, of their history, of any significant reference to their physical existence. There were no signifying cultural practices embedded in this landscape which related to European experience. This land bore no markings of the plough or hoe; there had been no harvest; there were no familiar monuments; no evidence of ownership or exchange of the land as property. There was no haystack, no stile, no hedge, no road, no bridge, no cottage, no smokestack, no spire and no discernible boundary to the viewers gaze.

For some members of the First Fleet, the Antipodes may have represented merely a chapter in their naval or military careers, or, perhaps for some, a scientific journey of discovery, but for the majority, the alien landscape which confronted them as they disembarked represented a destination; the end to their journey; the place where they must, for the foreseeable future, remain.

Most would have come to the realization that any further contact with the familiar landscape of their homeland was unlikely and this terrifying revelation must have been similar to the contemporary horror of being abandoned on the moon or set adrift in space. Irish political prisoner, John Mitchel wrote in his diary on July 30th, 1850:

The birds have a foreign tongue, the very trees whispering to the wind, whisper in accents unknown to me....all sights and sounds of nature are alien to me.

(Webby: 1989:41)

Whilst the experience of migration to the alien and “empty” environment of New South Wales was undoubtedly a challenging one for the free settlers, sailors and soldiers of the First Fleet, it was doubly difficult for the convicts. Carter describes how, in having to face physical deportation and confront psychic exile, the convict settler not only had to contend with banishment, both physical and cultural, but, cast in the role of colonizer, was expected to assume cultural dominance over this unknown landscape (Carter: 1992:101).

For the convict artist Thomas Watling, the landscape of Port Jackson represented the Other; the complete inversion of natural form as he understood it. In 1793 he wrote to his aunt of a
hellish landscape in which:

In the warmer season, the thunder very frequently rolls tremendous accompanied by scorching wind, so intolerable as almost to obstruct respiration; whilst the surrounding horizon looks one entire sheet of uninterrupted flame (Webby: 1989:13).

Like Crusoe, alone with a single footprint in the sand, the European settlers in New South Wales could not comprehend their position in this alien landscape. Their responses were manifested in different ways; from the direct marking of the landscape in an attempt to render it familiar, to the intrusion of a familiar language, which allowed the land to be punctuated so that it could be read as experience. As Paul Carter explains in The Road to Botany Bay, this language involved a system of measurement and a convention of naming which familiarized the alien environment, gave it visibility and form, and made it inhabitable by white immigrants. This language was the Picturesque and through the application of Picturesque devices, both in description and in the manipulation of the landscape, European settlers were able to translate views into surroundings and surroundings into significant histories (Carter: 1987:247). Parallel activities such as the carving of imagery directly into the landscape as appears at Iron Cove also allowed the marginalised European to articulate the experience of isolation and at the same time perhaps, to find an expressive means which was more appropriate to their situation.

READING THE LANDSCAPE OF IRON COVE

In attempting my reading of Iron Cove I acknowledge the readings of this piece of land which have been made by others, particularly historians such as Carol Powell and archaeologists such as John Clegg, and the marks that other anonymous authors have left behind for me to read. As Krim Benterrack and Stephen Muecke discovered in their study of Paddy Roe's country in the Roebuck Plains of Western Australia (Benterrack, Muecke and Roe: 1996), the reading of the land is not a singular activity but a multi-layered one made from many different knowledges of place, geography, gender, and points of view. In their journey of exploration what Paddy Roe recognized as song, Krim Benterrack saw as colour and texture and Muecke as history or as writing. Muecke writes:
We have learnt that rather than any one of them being absolutely right, there is a range of purposes, economic or otherwise, to which each reading offers up its services. (Benterrak, Muecke and Roe: 1996:76)

Likewise, David Malouf observes in the 1998 Boyer Lecture series, A Spirit of Play:

A land can bear any number of cultures laid one above the other or set side by side. It can be inscribed and written upon many times. (Malouf: 1999:51)

Paul Carter also acknowledges, the colonialist's specific need for a sense of space and time, obvious in the writing of Major Mitchell for instance:

To an European, the prospect of an open country has a double charm in regions for the most part covered with primeval forests, calling up pleasing reminiscences of the past, brighter prospects for the future - inspiring a sense of freedom, especially when viewed from the back of a good horse (Carter: 1987:245).

In my reading of Iron Cove, particular attention will be focused on the known history of occupation of the site and on the interpretation of the imagery contained within the rock engravings found there.

The site under investigation extends for approximately five kilometers along the southern shores of Iron Cove on the Parramatta River, touching on the municipal boundaries of Leichhardt, Ashfield and Drummoyne (See Map A). Previously known as Long Cove, Iron Cove was so named because of the “small iron stone, not larger than peas, scattered over the surface” recorded in James Atkinson’s Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in the Colony of New South Wales, 1826, (Russell: 1982:42).

The southern shore extends to Long Nose Point, through Rozelle to Birchgrove and the northern shore skirts the suburbs of Five Dock, Russell Lea and Drummoyne. Two islands, Cockatoo Island and Spectacle Island guard the mouth of the cove near Birkenhead Point and a smaller island, Rodd Island rests between Rodd Point and the Iron Cove Bridge. Iron
Cove in turn has two smaller bays, Sisters Bay and Half Moon Bay, and is approximately ten minutes by ferry from Circular Quay.

Iron Cove is one of very many similar coves and bays which form Sydney Harbour, but it is also unique because of the combinations of land markings which it contains, from the curious rock engravings, and the Rodd Family tomb surrounded by water, to the remnants of a garden landscaped in the Picturesque tradition to accompany the grand architecture and fortifications of Kirkbride.

The rock engravings occur on the south eastern shore of Iron Cove, spread over an area of approximately two hundred metres of foreshore. They are clustered around a prominent sandstone outcrop immediately behind Rozelle Hospital (formerly Callan Park Psychiatric Hospital) and Sydney College of the Arts (formerly Kirkbride). These mysterious and unauthored marks exist alongside the elaborately designed landscape of the garden and the bleak imposing convict built Rodd family tomb, prompting a multi-layered reading of the land.

**HISTORY OF OCCUPATION AND LAND USE**

**INDIGENOUS OCCUPATION**

Prior to European settlement, Iron Cove was the territory occupied by two major hordes (clans) of the Eora people. The first was the Wangal whose territory extended along the southern shores of the Parramatta river from approximately the Petersham area, to Rosehill. The second was the Cadigal who occupied the land to the east of Petersham to South Head (Turbet: 1989:21-22). The presence of an Aboriginal midden on the western edge of the site is noted on the 1996 Survey map compiled by Michael Barry, which accompanies the *Heritage Survey* of that year. A petition to the Governor in 1842 from Brent Clements Rodd of Rodd Point, to curb the activities of lime burners in the area confirms the presence of “great quantities of cockle shells” on the shore of his Iron Cove estate, (Russell: 1982:85) further testimony to a substantial Aboriginal presence.

The Drummoyne peninsula was originally called Warrembah by the Aboriginal people,
meaning where the sweet waters meet (Russell: 1982:124). That is, the waters of Iron Cove were perceived as the meeting place of the sweet or fresh water and the salt waters of the Harbour. Warrembah today refers to a suburb on the northwestern side of the peninsula between Russell Lea and Abbotsford.

JOHN RYAN BRENAN AND GARRY OWEN ESTATE

The area of land on which the rock carvings are located was known as the Garry Owen Estate and had its origins in the first land grants made in the area (Leong: 1985:5). The Garry Owen Estate comprised two substantial grants, Fairlight, a grant of fifty acres made to Luke Ralph in 1821 and a grant of one hundred acres adjoining, made to Lawrence Butler in 1819. Both these acreages were subsequently purchased by John Ryan Brenan, lawyer and Coroner, who consolidated them into the Garry Owen Estate in 1839. Brenan built two mansions on the property, Garry Owen House in 1840, which became his family home, and Broughton House in 1842, which he leased out and later sold. The name Garry Owen was reported in The Sydney Empire, 7th April, 1856 to be the name of Brenan’s birthplace in County Limerick, Ireland (Leong: 1985:6).

In 1841 it was reported in the Australian that the Garry Owen wharf had been completed and punt services to the western shore of the cove would begin (Russell: 1982:72). Brenan’s lavish lifestyle was soon at odds with his income and in an attempt to solve his financial problems, he subdivided part of the Garry Owen Estate in 1854. However, only five and a half acres were sold in 1855 and 1856 and after repeatedly mortgaging the estate Brenan finally lost everything in 1864. He died at Petersham in June 1868.

ASYLUM

The estate was bought by businessman John Gordon in 1865 who continued the subdivision and renamed the property Callan Park. In 1874 the New South Wales government purchased a majority section of the estate for the purposes of establishing a new hospital for the insane. In May 1876 the first patients were transferred from Gladesville Asylum to the refurbished mansion, Garry Owen House. The Hospital for the Insane, Callan Park, was
proclaimed, despite a sustained protest from neighbouring landholders, in the Government Gazette on 1st August, 1878. The grounds were landscaped and the introduction of animals including an emu, a kangaroo and a pony (Leong: 1985:13) and an alpaca (Clegg: 1994:6) into the park was encouraged as an aid to the recovery process of the inmates.

In 1880 work began on the construction of the new buildings for the hospital, to be named the Kirkbride buildings after Dr. S. Kirkbride, an eminent American whose writings on the housing of the insane were greatly admired by the superintendent of Callan Park, Dr. Frederick N. Manning and his architect, James Barnet.

In 1893 a seven acre section of swamp land on the north west boundary of Callan Park was reclaimed. This area was used as a vegetable garden in the early 1900s and a pathway across this flat area gave access to a wharf, an important link to the river transport (Leong: 1985:22)

Broughton House, the mansion built by Brenan in 1842, had a great many owners, finally becoming the family home of John and Elizabeth Keep and family from 1864 to 1905. The House was sold to William and Frederick Langdon who gave the residence and its twenty four acres of “beautifully laid out lawn with fish ponds and summer houses, tropical ferns and plants” (Leong: 1884:8) to be used as a haven for shell shocked soldiers returning from World War 1. In 1921 Broughton House became Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic.

At the turn of the century Callan Park was regarded as a model institution but in 1961 a Royal Commission was called in response to claims of overcrowding and outdated treatments. In 1976 Callan Park and Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic were amalgamated to form Rozelle Hospital. Changing ideas in the treatment of mental illness plus the deterioration of some of the buildings led to a further commissioned report, The Richmond Report of 1983, following which the number of beds was severely reduced, wards closed and other uses sought for the site.

The original Garry Owen House was converted into the Sydney Writers Centre in 1991 and the Kirkbride Block was converted for use as the Sydney College of the Arts in 1993.
Plate. 6. Rodd Family Tomb. Rodd Point.

Plate. 7. Carving of a steamer at Iron Cove.
Rodd Island and Rodd Point took their names from Brent Clements Rodd who settled there in 1845 after purchasing thirty nine acres of land with frontages onto Iron Cove and Iron Creek, in 1838 (Russell: 1982:84). Brent Clements Rodd, like his neighbour, John Ryan Brenan, was also a lawyer and a colourful character. He was a political radical, a supporter of Thomas Paine and a friend to Henry Parks. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly and was known as an eccentric. Accounts of the behaviour of some of his children would seem to indicate that they were similarly spirited people and Rodd’s rejection of recommendations from the children’s tutor that they be flogged or otherwise punished (Russell: 1982:89) supports accounts of Rodd as a tolerant if somewhat non-conformist parent.

He built Barnstaple Manor as the family home in 1845, overlooking Rodd Point. The property was clearly recognized by its giant windmill, extensive gardens and an avenue of pines. Many of the streets of Russell Lea today bear the names of his and his wife Sarah’s twelve children. Rodd was not a farmer. He kept up his legal practice in the city as well as his political activity and made his money from land speculation in the area (Russell: 1982:83-84). Rodd's most significant and lasting contribution to the area was the building of his family tomb at Rodd Point, formerly Vault Point, a narrow neck of land protruding into Iron Cove, approximately two kilometres by water from the foreshore containing the carvings. (Plt.6).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Less intrusive and grandiose incursions into the landscape of Iron Cove also occurred. Limeburners were a presence in the Iron Cove landscape, collecting shells from the middens in the area, which they burnt to produce lime to sell to masons and bricklayers. Brent Clements Rodd repeatedly complained of persons collecting shells and wood on his property at Rodd Point and Rodd Island, adjacent the Garry Owen estate, as well as the unauthorized grazing of cattle in the area (Russell: 1982:85-87). Violent clashes occasionally took place between Rodd and these intruders and the shell gatherers' boats were confiscated (Russell: 1982:84-87).
By the middle of the nineteenth century heavy river traffic both commercial and passenger, was normal in Iron Cove. An advertisement in the *Sydney Illustrated News*, January 20th 1855, for the sale of the Birkenhead Boiling Down Works and Stockyard, promises a First Class Steamer would carry people to and from the site.

An advertisement in the *Echo* newspaper of 28th August, 1890, lists one of the advantages of living in the Drummoyne peninsular, that it is “well served by the line of steamers run by the Balmain Steam Ferry Company to Drummoyne and Leichhardt (Russell: 1982:119). The advantages of this modern convenience appears to have been recorded in a rock engraving of a steam ship among the carvings on the Iron Cove shoreline, near Callan Park (Plt. 7).

In 1830 two road building gangs were employed in the vicinity of Five Dock. A party of twenty seven convicts “out of irons” and six bullocks were stationed at Longbottom (Concord) and another gang of similar size operated out of Five Dock (Russell: 1982:43).

The first bridge across Iron Cove was opened in 1882 preventing tall masted sailing ships from entering the cove. The extent of deep-hulled vessels in the cove prior to this is not known but soundings taken within that part of the river from 1788 (Russell: 1982:6) to an account published in *The Yachtsman’s Guide to Sydney Harbour, 1898*, suggest that such traffic would have been limited. However, the passage of tall ships making their way up the harbour would have been clearly observable from the southeastern shores of Iron Cove.

The training ship *Sobraon* was moored near Biloela Island (Cockatoo Island) at the neck of Iron Cove, clearly visible from the site of the Iron Cove carvings. Dymocks *Guide to the Parramatta River*, 1897 claims *Sobraon* was the “means of reclaiming thousands of boys who would have otherwise grown up to a life of vice and crime” (Powell: 1986:13).

The grid of contemporary suburban development has overtaken much of the land’s surface in and around Iron Cove. However, the landscape of Iron Cove today is extensively used for recreation supporting three rowing clubs and two sailing clubs, cycling tracks and a walking track which extends along the full extent of the waters edge from Drummoyne on

the northern side to Rozelle on the southern shore.

In the surface of the land the remnants of authored and unauthored marking systems and the intentions and desires of waves of previous occupants are still visible, and, as if by some divine symmetry, the gallery of rock carvings now lies within the grounds of the Sydney College of the Arts.

THE DION COVE CARVINGS

The most comprehensive studies of the carvings at Iron Cove have been carried out by Carol Powell in her book, *A River Revived. The Parramatta* published by the UNSW Press, 1987, and by John Clegg of the Archaeology Department of Sydney University in his 1994 paper entitled *Engravings as Text: Exotic Images From Callan Park*.

The most recent study is that produced by John Clegg, Michael Barry and George J. Susino entitled *Callan Park Rock Engravings Survey Project, February 1996*, carried out with a grant from the New South Wales Government on the recommendation of the Heritage Council of New South Wales (hereafter referred to as the *Heritage Survey 1996*). The interpretive content of this Survey written by John Clegg is substantively the same as the 1994 version sited above.

A full listing and illustration of the carvings, their dimensions and location is included in Appendix One. There are approximately forty-five carvings of varying clarity on the site. The marks which make up the carvings are not uniform, although there are similarities in the style of mark making between individual carvings. There are a number of repeated motifs in the carvings (Plts.8 and 9). These include sailing ships; square, star and crescent combinations, which John Clegg refers to as compass roses (Clegg: 1996:19) often with the addition of lettering and profile heads resembling mast heads; lines of numbers, possibly dates, 1855,1883,1889, 1910 and 1919; lines of lettering in which the word, JAMHAMBON, or sequences of letters containing the word JAMHAMBON, are frequent; independent profile heads, one wearing a brimmed hat. There are also crescents with and without lettering and four fish including one quite large one measuring 3530mm (3.85
metres) with an inscription inside it (Fig. D.1) John Clegg refers to this particular carving as of Aboriginal origin, the inscription, BALENEDLAMR, having been added later by a European artist. (Clegg: 1994:2). Other motifs include globes, a steam ship or ferry, an anchor, two frontal figures of women, one attached to a crescent, and a quadruped, possible a horse.

The style and competence of the “drawing” in these engravings varies. Most of the images are carved in linear outline with the occasional pecked area particularly in the decorative circles which appear inside the stars, the hair or caps of the human figures in profile and in two of the crescent images. The images of sailing ships are particularly intricate and appear to be in near perfect scale. The star, square, crescent combinations, or compass roses, also vary considerably from simple four-pointed star and empty crescent to elaborate combinations of star, double square and crescent with inscription. They also vary considerably in size and clarity.

Who made these carvings? One interpretation is that of Carol Powell who suggests that at least some of the carvings are of Masonic origin, based on a Masonic translation of the JAMHAMBON series of letters. Powell arrives at this assertion through a nineteenth century work by Albert G Mackey entitled a Lexicon of Freemasonry in which a list of substitute words appear. Using this list as a dictionary Powell translates the JAMHAMBON sequence to read GOD THE BUILDER (Powell: 1987:52).

Certainly there were masons working in the area between 1840 and 1842 on the building of Garry Owen House and Broughton House, and between 1880 and 1885 on the building of the Kirkbride block. But if the numbers carved on the rocks indicate dates, the only such date that corresponds to a Masonic presence is 1883. The earliest date, 1855 is between the major periods of building activity and the latest date, 1889 is after the completion of the major works at Kirkbride. Of course the “dates” need not be directly related to the JAMHAMBON sequences. Indeed both may have been carved by masons or others at different times.

On the other hand, the prefacing of the JAMHAMBON letters by either MSS, MS, or MR would seem to indicate that the JAMHAMBON letters are more likely to be of nautical
origin than of Masonic derivation, especially since one such JAMHAMBON carving appears on the hull of a sailing ship.

Powell also refers to an ankh, an ancient Egyptian symbol taken up by the Masons (Powell: 1987:52), however, as Clegg points out (Clegg: 1996:21), this carving is clearly an anchor rather than an ankh. It could still be interpreted as a Masonic symbol however, as Gould's History of Freemasonry lists several masons marks, monograms and emblems which feature an anchor including the Strassburg Architects and the Howff, Dundee. (Wright: und:148). Other marks which could be interpreted as of Masonic derivation are the crescent, which is listed in Gould's History among the marks from France (Ibid) and the interlocking protractors which Gould lists as belonging to the Carpenter's Company (Op.Cit: 150). The protractors occur only once and inside a crescent form (Fig.D10). The interlocking protractors are a well-recognized Masonic symbol still in use today.

The other major viewpoint is that of John Clegg, who bases his interpretation largely on the "eye witness" account of an ex-resident of the area. Clegg suggests that the carvings were probably the work of a single artist whom he describes as:

"...a shy person with a European seafaring background - he may have spent many hours as a helmsman. He knew a great deal about ships and compass roses but not the complications of longitude and navigation. To him men were people, women a bit frightening. He may have been fond of a woman by name, Josephefe Jamhambon, or he may have hated salt pork and complained to the authorities. He was an artist of no mean merit, apparently without formal training. It is possible he may have got the idea of exploiting this particular medium from Aboriginal rock engravings." (Clegg et.el: 1996:22).

John Clegg is an authority on rock art particularly in the Sydney Basin and his interpretation of the Iron Cove carvings is thorough and, to an extent, accommodating of other possibilities. However, my study of the engravings does not concur with his for a number of reasons.
Firstly, the evidence of the carvings themselves vary too much in content, execution and competence to be the work of a single person. For example, variations on the star, square and crescent range from very elaborate double squares (Fig.D18) with dates and human figures attached, to decorated versions (Fig.D13) in which the star and the square are adorned with many pecked circles, to very simplified or stylized versions of the star, crescent and square (Fig.D23 and Fig.D33).

At times the crescent is dominant in the combination, almost containing the star and square (Fig.D3), at other times the star and square appear to rest on top of the points of the crescent. (Fig.D2). Also, the crescent is sometimes executed in the pecked technique (Fig.D34 and D.40) as opposed to the more common line engraving.

The range of motifs and dates also suggests more than one artist was involved. Of the variety of motifs already listed, the sailing ships are by far the most complicated but consistently competent engravings, closely observed, detailed and confidently executed. On the other hand, some, but not all of the crescent, star, square combinations are similarly confident while others are disproportionate and less assured. The human figures and the horse figure resemble children’s drawings in their level of mastery.

It could be the case of course, that the artist was more accomplished with marine subjects than with the figure, but the difference in competence is such that I would doubt a single artist was responsible. Also the sailing boats in particular are discrete images. Apart from the one bearing the inscription JAMHAMBON, the ships stand alone. They are not combined with other motifs and their quality is consistent.

Secondly, the groupings of letters again pose problems for the single artist theory, as they attract diverse translations and meanings. Powell’s translation of the JAMHAMBON letters as “God the builder” becomes “Man the builder” in Clegg’s translation (Clegg: 1996:22). Clegg offers instead a familial interpretation in which JOSEPHSE JAMHAMBON is the phantom object of the artist’s desire, or, an alternative explanation based on mis spelt French in which the MSSJAMREPIRJAMBON inscription (Fig.D.21) translates as “Sirs, I dislike salt pork”. Clegg also translates the inscription BALENEDLAMR, which occurs inside the fish engraving (Fig.D1) as illiterate French for “whale of the sea”(Clegg:
Plate 10. Carvings of crescent shapes with "names" inscribed in them.
In both Powell and Clegg’s account, the JAMHAMBON and BALENEDLAMR letters are the only ones for which a translation has been attempted. All other groups of letters have been abandoned as either codes or gibberish, or possible illiterate Low Countries dialects (Clegg: 1996:22). If, as Clegg suggests, the artist was a seafaring person with a knowledge of navigation, it is reasonable to assume he was not illiterate, which leaves us to conclude that he was either using some kind of code or, that there was another carver who was indeed illiterate.

One aspect of the lettering combinations that Clegg does not address is the WILERE and BALINE inscriptions, (Pl. 10) which occur inside crescent shapes. These images resemble the inscribed breastplates given to Aborigines by the colonial authorities. An exhibition of these breastplates entitled, Poignant Regalia, curated by Tania Cleary, took place at the Greenway Gallery, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney in May 1993 (See Cleary: 1993). This possible interpretation of the crescent shapes of Iron Cove has not been investigated.

There is quite strong visual evidence to suggest that the majority of the carvings were made by non-indigenous carver/s. Two of the fish carvings are very likely of Aboriginal origin as they closely resemble similar Aboriginal carving in the Sydney Basin Area, however, one of these has the inscription BALENEDLAMR added. A third fish carving, unlike the others, has scales which is not usual in Aboriginal engravings of fish. Similarly, another fish carving has the inscription, DRENJET inside the outline.

Similarly, the carvings of sailing ships at Iron Cove are unlike examples of indigenous renderings of such European imagery which have been recorded in other parts of Sydney, for example, at Devil’s Rock, Maroota (Stanbury & Clegg: 1996:99). Sailing ships and steamers do appear in Aboriginal rock carvings and more commonly in rock paintings (Layton: 1992:90-93) but these images are far less detailed than those that appear at Iron Cove. In particular, the indigenous carved images are characteristically simpler in outline, with less detailed inclusion of rigging, portholes and planking of the hulls than one finds at Iron Cove. It is unlikely therefore, that the Iron Cove sailing ships are the work of indigenous carvers. However, it is important to remember that the existence of indigenous
carvings of European vessels is proof that the practice of rock carving was carried out by Aboriginal people long after European invasion.

Another possibility is that the letters were a collaboration between two or more carvers, perhaps between an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal, one of whom was endeavouring to translate Aboriginal words into English phonetically. Perhaps the letters are initials or parts of names carved by a group of people working together.

The delinquent crew (Powell: 1986:13) of the training ship Sobraon, moored at nearby Cockatoo Island, might well have contributed to the marking of this site and it is quite likely that many of them would have been illiterate or semi-literate. Perhaps JAMHAMBON was a nickname for a boy, an officer, or a ship?

Thirdly, given the number of people of different races, ages, backgrounds, professions and states of mental health who are known to have been present in the area of Callan Park, Broughton Hall and Rodd Point between 1840 and 1920, it is reasonable to assume that there might have been more than one artist involved in the engraving of the foreshore.

It is possible that the shell gatherers who plundered the Aboriginal middens nearby might have left their mark on the sandstone. Similarly, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the high spirited and adventurous Rodd children from the neighbouring estate, might have ventured to this spot either by boat or on foot and left their engraved contribution to the Iron Cove "gallery".

John and Elizabeth Keep, residents of Broughton House between 1864 and 1905, had ten children who would also have had access to this area via a path leading to the foreshore and the nearby wharf, which was situated at the bottom of what is now Wharf Road. It is also plausible that the Keep children could have frequented the "gallery" and contributed to the engravings. Likewise Masons present in the area in the 1840s and again in the 1880s certainly had the tools at their disposal to take part in a little rock engraving.

It has been suggested that the carving of the horse-like animal could have been the work of a Callan Park resident (Dutton: 1994:33) since it is known that animals were imported into
the grounds of the hospital to aid the recovery of patients.

Likewise the engraved dates 1917 and 1919 would have had obvious significance to shell-shocked World War 1 soldiers recuperating at Broughton Hall, who may well have been responsible for these carvings. A parallel for this kind of activity exists in the carving of a sphinx by a World War 1 soldier, in the national park at Kuringai-Chase to Sydney’s north (SMH: 1924) (Hornsby Advocate: 1995). William Shirley, a resident at the Lady Davidson Home for Tuberculosis Patients in 1924, carved a scale model of the Sphinx at Giza in the rock face near the entrance to the Kuringai National Park. The natural shape of the rock outcrop resembled the sphinx. Its transformation by ex-mason and serviceman, William Shirley into a scale model of the sphinx he had encountered while serving with the 13th Battalion, was an activity of extraordinary dedication. Shirley's project is also an important example of the kind of obsessive art which people produce as therapy, commemoration or perhaps exorcism, which may well explain some of the imagery of the Iron Cove engravings.

The site of the carvings is situated above a sandy beach on which small craft could easily have landed. This area of the Parramatta River around Callan Park and Rodd Island was a popular picnic spot last century (Russell: 1982:88) as it is now, which allows for the invasion of any number of potential carvers.

Given the presence of such a variety of people and activities in the area it is unlikely that a single artist could have created all these engravings unhindered over a period of sixty-four years between 1855 and 1919.

Clegg suggests that it is feasible that a single artist, the seafaring recluse, who lived on a houseboat moored near the point, could have made the carvings over a period of some sixty years (Clegg: 1996:18), the first while he was in his twenties and the final markings when he was in his eighties. This romantic image sits well with a man of mature years but it is hard to imagine a twenty-year-old reclusive sea captain.

Finally, I am skeptical of Clegg’s interpretation because it accepts without question the modernist notion of the centrality of the single (male) genius view of artistic
production (Chadwick: 1990:15-16). In this respect Clegg’s interpretation tells us more about his own idea of the artist than it does about the generation of the rock engravings at Callan Park.

The available evidence is not sufficient to prove that the artist/s of the Iron Cove engravings was either male or female. The presence alone, of an eccentric seafaring recluse does not make him the artist. No one, as far as we know, witnessed this man or any other man or woman actually carving an image in the rock face. Whilst the carving of images in rock faces was probably not something that many nineteenth century white women did, this does not prove conclusively that in this instance, the artist was male.

Whether made by a single artist or by many, male or female, the images themselves are intriguing in their obsessive pre-occupation with selected motifs, and in the possible interpretations of these motifs. The repetition of compass roses, if that is what they are intended to be, betrays a pre-occupation with being fixed in space and time. These images may well be derived from the artist’s life in another space and time, namely a navigator or seafarer on route from the Old World to the new. But they are also about where the artist is at the time the engravings were made, that is, a fixed space and time on the shores of Iron Cove, Sydney, Australia, c. 1855. The compass rose images certainly suggest a journey yet they are at the same time locked into the landscape of Iron Cove. This dichotomy of the fixed and the moving is indicative of a migratory sensibility. The stars/compasses are largely orientated to the north northeast or towards Sydney Heads, suggesting an attempt to point the artist/s towards the way “home”.

The star/compasses are the dominant motif on the site. There are nineteen such combinations of star/square and crescent which suggest a certain obsession with this motif in the case of a single artist, or, alternatively that the star/square/crescent was associated with a particular ceremony of measurement of time which necessitated its periodic repetition by one or more engravers. Again it might simply have been a competition amongst engravers as to whom could make the best one. What is apparent is that this particular motif was important enough as an identifying mark, to warrant its frequent repetition.
The popular interpretation of the engravings as evidence of obsession and a pre-occupation with esoteric, even satanic ceremony, is influenced by the popular belief that the engravings were the work of the mentally ill patients of Callan Park and Broughton Hall. This is alluded to in Geoffrey Dutton’s Bulletin article of January 25th, 1994. When I was photographing the carvings in 1996 my activities aroused the interest of a group of women and children picnicking nearby. One of the women proceeded to assure me that the carvings were the work of a satanic cult active in the area. I dismissed her explanation but it was not the first time I had heard such a theory. As Anne E. Bowler writes in Outsider Art.

Contesting Boundaries in Contemporary Culture:

The social construction of the art of the insane belongs to a history in which the "otherness" of marginal individuals or groups is celebrated in order to mark off their distance from the dominant culture (Zolberg and Cherbo: 1997:31)

It is this very "otherness" that so fascinated the modern artists such as Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Juan Miro and Jean Dubuffet. More recently the Parallel Visions exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1992 revisited this fascination with objects and forms of expression which fall outside the established parameters of cultural discourse. I acknowledge the attraction of the "raw", the freshness of the untutored but I would argue that it would be inappropriate to dismiss the Iron Cove carvings as “outsider art” alone. While it is possible that some of the images, particularly the figures, may have been carved by one or more patients of the asylum, there is a deliberation underpinning the work which suggests that a wider meaning, however obscure, was intended. There is most certainly an obsessive quality about the images largely due to the repetition of the star/square/crescent forms and the JAMHAMBON lettering. But as Clegg points out, the mere repetition of an image is not necessarily proof of obsession. Aboriginal artists often repeat the same or similar motifs as indeed do non-Aboriginal artists.

There is also something intrinsically social about the imagery in the majority of these carved images. The fish, the sailing boats and steamer, and the compass motifs can all be interpreted as representations of activities such as food gathering, travel and transport which are essentially public activities, unlike the often very private imagery that typifies the outsider vision. On the other hand, the “coded” lettering might well be a language
known only to a single marginalised engraver, echoing William Shirley's all-consuming dedication to the reproduction of the Giza Sphinx in Kuringai-Chase. For Shirley, a man "injured" by his experience of war, living an institutionalized existence in the tuberculosis ward, the carving of the sphinx became the main focus of his life. It is equally possible that the Iron Cove carvings at least in part are the product of a similar passion.

SUMMARY

The marking of the landscape is a means by which the marker positions him/herself culturally and temporally. So too the reading of the marks made in the landscape reveals the positioning of the historian and the archaeologist interpreting the carvings.

For example, in the Masonic interpretation of Carol Powell, the marks are seen as those of the Protestant builders of nation, the instruments of colonial development. Whereas for John Clegg, the romantic interpretation of the marks as those of the lone, reclusive, European, male artist reveals his own positioning, perhaps unconsciously, within a patriarchal contemporary Australian culture.

Indigenous claims to the site are indisputable. There is ample record in accounts such as William Bradley's Journal to substantiate a significant Aboriginal presence in the area and the existence of middens together with the style of the larger fish carving in particular, confirm indigenous association with the site. However, the proclamation of the site as an Aboriginal site at a time in which the reconciliation debate is fore-grounded in the contemporary political climate, reveals as much about the political aspirations of Leichhardt Council as it does about the history of the marks.

A more complex reading of the marks might recognize a number of systems of marking in operation.

1. The activities of the indigenous carver.

2. The obsessive mark making of the outsider, pre-occupied with measurement and mapping, plotting his (presumably) position in the landscape.
3. A collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous carvers.

4. The coded messages and mischievous markings of children and adolescents.

5. The doodling of stonemasons.

6. The creative activities of recuperating asylum patients

7. And what of John Ryan Brenan? Could he or his guests or employees have tried their hand at rock engraving. Certainly, as they made their way to the summerhouse or to the bathhouse, they would have seen any engravings already made by Aborigines in the area. Perhaps they were also moved to mark the land. Did Brenan recognize in these markings, the practices of his own ancestors in marking the stones and landscape of Ireland?

8. The presence of convicts and shell gatherers in the area may provide another possible explanation. The "convict labour" that made possible the estates of Mr. Brennan and Mr. Rodd was the hidden infrastructure of colonial development.

All of these readings are possible, indeed, some, if not all of these mark-making activities may well have taken place concurrently. The carvings of Iron Cove represent primarily, the layering of the land by successive waves of occupants, each with their own needs. There is no one interpretation of these marks and that is their power. That is what draws myself and others to the site. The observer brings with him/her their own needs and desires and as a result, as Clegg himself suggests, everyone who comments on these engravings finds something different (Clegg: 1996:5).

Paul Carter's investigations of the colonization of the landscape of Australia have provided a framework which seeks to "break down the opposition between history and poetry" (Carter: 1996:295). This investigative framework has helped to make visible the poetry/history of Iron Cove. Similarly, Ross Gibson's account of the longing of emigrants both free and bounded, for a more familiar nature, assists in the interpretation of the Iron Cove markings.

Richard White also, in Inventing Australia, gives an account of the misery of the convict emigrants and of the contempt in which they were held (White: 1981:16-28). The carvings at Iron Cove and the Rodd Point tomb are reminders of the diaspora of the emigrant. These elaborate and mysterious markings resonate with the longings of the displaced.
engraved ships and compasses evoke a nostalgia for another land and the desire for a sense of home in the landscape of the new land.

This chapter has concerned itself with the interpretation of the mark in the landscape as a means of recording and communicating the needs of the emigrant colonizer. In chapter three the importance of the mark in the systematic measurement and transformation of nature in the service of culture will be examined more broadly, but concentrating finally once more on the landscape of Iron Cove.
CHAPTER THREE

THE PICTURESQUE AS AN ORDERING MARK

This chapter discusses the imposition of the Picturesque as a system of measurement in colonial Australia and in particular, in the landscape of Iron Cove. The idea of a Picturesque language of measurement as a colonizing tool, was first promoted by Paul Carter in *The Road to Botany Bay* of 1987 and has since become a seminal concept in the debate surrounding the Australian landscape and culture. Ian McLean recently concluded that:

Because the picturesque created a synthesis of nature and culture, it was the ideal aesthetic for representing the redemptive scene sought by colonialism. The picturesque confirms the mission of Western Empire (McLean: 1998:35).

This chapter situates my investigation of the Callan Park gardens at Iron Cove within the context of this ongoing debate.

The chapter concludes with a brief comparison of the two systems of marking in evidence at Iron Cove, the unauthorised marks of the engraver/s and the orchestrated Picturesque markings of the Callan Park gardens, and with their importance to me in constructing a personal sense of place and growth.

PICTURESQUE MEASUREMENT

As a way of regarding the natural world the Picturesque vision assumed a dominant position in the visual perception of eighteenth century Europe. This vision was based on the principles of picture making, reducing nature to a pleasing combination of formal elements, the fundamental assumption being that art (culture) improved upon nature.

The Picturesque emerged as a style in Britain with the publication of Rev. William Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales*, in 1782. In the several
Tracks to Badbury Camp (based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office).

Alignments through Stonehenge.

Plate 11. Alfred Watkins' ley systems.
decades preceding, Lancelot “Capability” Brown had become the most famous landscape architect in Britain, described at his death in 1783, by Horace Walpole as “Lady Nature’s second husband” (Bisgrove: 1990:102)

A complex theory of beauty based on the extraction of significant elements from the raw data of nature (Pugh. Ed: 1990:19), the Picturesque contained within its aesthetic structure and lexicon, the elements of sensual and verbal experience which rendered the landscape of Australia comprehensible to the European gaze.

It should not be forgotten that the aesthetic from which the Picturesque was formulated, was grounded in a powerful patriarchal nation underpinned by a rigid class system and enchanted with its own industrial, scientific, military and naval prowess. This nation assumed the right to colonize and to civilize other cultures as it saw fit as well as to appropriate the natural and spiritual wealth of the cultures it colonized and to use and trade land as it deemed necessary.

Conflicting definitions of what was thought truly Picturesque in eighteenth century England were tempered by the differing requirements of the major disciplines involved, namely, landscape painting and landscape gardening. Some aspects of Picturesque painting such as the framing of views and vistas with foliage, the featuring of houses and temples, and the contrast of rough and smooth were easily translated into the garden and at times these elements moved freely between both disciplines. The conflict between painting and gardening was essentially that of conflicting points of view, the one static, the other mobile. The picture had but one single viewpoint, the garden on the other hand, had many. The picture was a single window into the garden, but, in the garden itself, the viewer "traversed the landscape in a series of measured passages from point to point" (Carter: 1988:239).

Each passage was structured in such a way as to present pleasing contrasts and emphases, which affirmed the sovereignty and ease of access of the viewer. John A. Barrell adds that visual and sensual monotony was avoided in favor of ordered combinations of water, wood, even and uneven ground (Pugh, (ed) :1990:25).

Capability Brown developed his “natural” style which acknowledged the "capabilities" (Bisgrove: 1990:96) of the place, using existing contours on the one hand, and
damming rivers to form lakes on the other, as in his most famous landscape at Blenheim.
Brown’s designs “imitated” nature (Birgrove: 1990:100), subtly orchestrating the topology
surrounding the country house to provide a carefully measured visual progression through
the garden to arrive at the seat of power, the house. At Blenheim for instance, the palace is
some distance from the entrance to the garden. One approaches along a meandering path,
through an avenue of trees, pausing before the ornamental lake, then over the Vanbrugh
bridge and on across open ground punctuated by groups of trees and hedges through which
the viewer is treated to tantalizing glimpses of the great house. The path takes advantage of
the contour of the land so that throughout the walk the viewer is afforded multiple
picturesque views of gently unfolding hills and stretches of water framed by careful
plantings of trees and shrubs. The landscape is both visually soothing and comfortably
negotiated.

Another of Brown’s trademarks was the "ha ha", a wall placed at the bottom of a ditch so
that the view from the house is uninterrupted while at the same time, uninvited guests and
wandering cattle are excluded from the main precinct of the house.

It was Capability Brown himself who first introduced the structure of language to describe
his manipulations of the landscape.

Now there, said he (to Hannah More), pointing his finger, I make a comma, and there,
pointing to another part (where an interruption is desirable to break the view?) a
parenthesis - now a full stop...(Bisgrove: 1990:99)

As Paul Carter has pointed out in *The Road to Botany Bay*, the picturesque was a quality
ascribed to the land partly due to its appearance, but largely due to its perceived ability to
provide a home. “Home” was a place of sustenance and security and one that was
capable of promoting a sense of well being for the occupant (Carter: 1988:235-239).
To locate the landscape of New South Wales in picturesque language rendered it familiar
and this process of familiarization was as much an expression of the settler’s need to
survive and to feel comfortable, as it was descriptive of the landscape itself. The important
task of establishing familiarity with the place and a spacial and temporal relationship to it,
as well as the immediate physical need to survive, were addressed through the Picturesque.
The use of picturesque language and the ordering of the land in the picturesque manner allowed the European settlers to make sense of a place in which they had no discernable past, and to give form to a landscape in which all known form appeared inverted.

The application of picturesque language in the reading of the landscape of Port Jackson is well illustrated in Thomas Watling’s painting of 1794. Watling is a seminal figure in the Picturesque translation of the landscape of Australia as Gibson makes clear in his depiction of the artist in *Camera Natura* (Gibson: 1986). Watling’s painting “A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove” (Plt. 12) opens a window into the garden which has been carved from the untamed landscape. In this garden, the bush has been cleared so that it appears only as a softening line along the horizon. Fields, cottages and vineyards punctuate the cleared site providing measured lines linking the buildings to the traces of nature along the horizon. Roads, hedges and small copses provide contrasts and emphases. In the foreground of the picture, clumps of trees on either side have been added to frame and contain the view. A road leads the eye into the middle distance which is softened by the stretch of water, itself broken in rhythmic sequences by tall grasses, bushes, ships at anchor and the smoke from a native’s fire. Beyond the water is the Vice Regal seat and in the foreground two gentlemen in fashionable day attire are engaged in conversation attended by a pet dog.

The establishment of Governor’s residences is important in this context as the ordered configuration of the landscape which occurred in the establishment of the Vice Regal seat, and its attendant gardens, provided the semblance of a white history in this alien landscape. In Watling’s drawing of “The First Residence of Governor Phillip at Parramatta” c. 1794 (Plt. 13) (deVries Evans: 1987:71) the rigidity of the landscape with its garden rows and lines of small houses leading to the elevated main house, the trees arranged in a picturesque grouping and the stocks in the foreground altogether proclaim the presence of English culture and authority.

The “empty page” of Australian landscape received a further inscription in Joseph Lycett’s aquatint of Elizabeth Farm, residence of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, 1825. Elizabeth Farm had a substantial villa, in the manner of the English country house and its insertion into the landscape surrounding Parramatta resembled the placement of an English country

house within a gentleman’s park. The villa nestles on a slight rise, in the crook of a fold of hills. A ditch in front of the villa echoes the ha ha of Capability Brown whilst small clusters of trees punctuate the strong diagonals formed by the fork of the river. A fence running along the ridge of the horizon keeps untamed nature at bay while John and Elizabeth stroll in the foreground, she gesturing grandly towards the unfolding vista of their property.

As the land itself was transformed by colonialism, the written and painted description of the landscape of the colony also changed from the lamentations of Thomas Watling to a distinctively picturesque form. To describe the topography as resembling a gentleman’s park for instance, helped in the familiarizing process through an association with landscape already known.

In a letter to her friend Eliza Kingdom in England, Elizabeth Macarthur described the land to the west of Parramatta, toward the Hawkesbury River, in distinctly picturesque language.

The greater part of the country is like an English Park, and trees give it the appearance of a wilderness or shrubbery, commonly attached to habitations of people of fortune.

The Hawkesbury is a noble, freshwater river taking its rise in a precipitous range of mountains, that has hitherto been impossible to pass.

...I spent an entire day on this river, going in a boat to a beautiful spot, named by the governor, Richmond Hill, high and overlooking a great extent of country. On one side are those stupendous barriers to which I have alluded, rising as it were immediately above your head; below the river itself still and unruffled: out of sight is heard a waterfall whose distant murmurs add an awfulness to the scene. (Webby: 1987:96)

Here, the naming of Richmond Hill, New South Wales, evokes the memory of its English namesake. Overlooking the Thames, Richmond Hill on London’s outskirts, was the fashionable picnic ground of the aristocracy celebrated in J.M.W. Turner’s painting, England: Richmond Hill on the Prince Regent’s Birthday, 1819 (Schama: 1996:Pl.28) Elizabeth Macarthur, in describing her idyllic day on the banks of a great river, in a Picturesque setting equivalent to that of London’s most prestigious park, establishes herself comfortably within the privileged ranks of colonial society and in the landscape of the
colony. In drawing a parallel through the association of Richmond Hill, New South Wales and the Richmond Hill of London society, Elizabeth assures her friend Eliza that all is well in the colony.

THE PICTURESQUE FRAME

The description of the landscape as “park-like” and “picturesque” served to further familiarize the unfamiliar nature of colonial Australia, and where the land could be physically transformed to meet the requirement of picturesque descriptive language, it was.

For many European settlers, the reading of the landscape of Australia needed the intrusion of the Picturesque. The landscape had to be made to obey the rules of entry. It had to be mapped and measured, punctuated and re-constructed according to the European spacial consciousness.

Likewise, the representation of the colonial landscape also needed to respond to the picturesque frame. The images of the landscape and settlement of New South Wales which were sent home to England or included in various collections of Picturesque views of the colony, were made according to the established rules of good picture making, presenting a view of the colony, which could be immediately understood as civilized.

The Picturesque as a way of seeing persisted in the representation of Australian landscape well into the twentieth century (Burn: 1990) particularly in the bastions of landscape representation such as the Wynne Prize, established by Richard Wynne in 1897 for the best painting of “Australian scenery”(Walters: 1997). Through this tradition the rendering of Australian landscape in picturesque terms became the expression of a fundamental visual relationship between the viewer, the artist and the natural world. It is this fundamental relationship that my studio work sets out to challenge. By abandoning the Picturesque, my work takes on another reading of the land and our relationship with it. This relationship is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
PICTURESQUE MEASUREMENT - IRON COVE

The Picturesque transformation of the Iron Cove landscape began with the consolidation of land holdings in the area into the Garry Owen estate, by Irish lawyer, John Ryan Brenan. (See Chapter Two). "Garry" means garden in Gaelic and in naming the land after his birth place in Ireland, (Leong: 1985:6), Brenan established both his ownership of the land, and a familiarity through association with a landscape and language already known.

Brenan was the son of a gentleman, arriving in the colony on board the Jessie in June 1834, equipped with letters of introduction and with the intention of practicing law. Governor Bourke made him Crown Solicitor but the Home Government refused to sanction the appointment so he went into private practice. In 1835 Bourke made him Coroner for Sydney and in 1836 appointed him to the temporary position of Principal Superintendent of Convicts.

Brenan appears to have been a controversial character. In 1837 an action was brought against him in the Supreme Court by a settler whose assigned convicts had been removed without the Governor’s consent (ADB: 1966:149). He won the case, however, with the support of Governor Bourke who had recently enacted a set of regulations aimed at limiting the exploitation of convict labour by landholders and abolishing "favouritism" (Lang: 1875:248-249) in the distribution of convicts.

Possibly as a result of the Supreme Court action, the Secretary of State for the Colonies refused to confirm Brenan’s appointment and ordered the repayment of ninety pounds in salary. Although Governor Gipps appointed him Third Police Magistrate, his salary was almost halved.

Brenan continued to attract the attention of the press who made much of his idiosyncrasies and in June, 1840 he issued a writ for libel against The Commercial Journal for one thousand pounds in damages (ADB: 1966:148).

He established a fine house on the Garry Owen Estate, with both a summerhouse and a bathhouse. He was described as the “Squire of Garry Owen” and the estate as a “prominent
gentleman’s estate and the social centre of Leichhardt Municipality in its day” (NSW PWR 92103: 1993:8). Besides the house, the estate had extensive stables and servants quarters, an orange grove, saw mill and blacksmith’s forge, elegant gardens and “an impressive avenue to the house, lined with trees and shrubs of mature growth and luxuriance, forming a beautiful serpentine approach” (Leong: 1985:6). Brenan himself was described as “witty, clever, very communicative and fond of entertaining, shrewd and eloquent” (Leong: 1985:8).

Brenan began the Picturesque transformation of the landscape of Iron Cove with the introduction of “serpentine” avenues, groves and mature and exotic plantings. The passage through the landscape was measured and orchestrated according to the best practices of landscape gardening, arriving at the seat of power, Garry Owen House. Through the conceptual framework of the Picturesque, Brenan imposed his own authority and taste on the land. Traces of his authorship are visible in the house as it stands today (Plts.14 and 15), its elevated position designed to take maximum Picturesque advantage of the site.

Evidence of original plantings and the sweeping approach to the house can still be seen. Brenan was forced to relinquish his holdings and Garry Owen Estate was sold in 1864 to John Gordon who renamed the estate Callan Park. In a real estate advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald of December, 7th 1873, the grounds were described as having:

“a perfect park like appearance... indeed nothing can concede the natural beauties of the position, right and left the landscape fades into scenes of pastoral beauty, wide expanses of parklands with glimpses in the distance of the quiet still waters of the river” (Powell: 1986:98)

A further stage of Picturesque conversion took place following the proclamation of Callan Park Hospital for the Insane in 1878 and the completion of the Kirkbride buildings in 1885 which were accompanied by further extensive landscaping.

The Kirkbride Block was designed on a pavilion layout resembling a Palladian country house. The starkness of the enclosing walls on three sides was broken by verandahs and on the fourth side a grassy bank descended into a ditch in which a wall high enough to contain the inmates was concealed. This device, known as a “ha ha”, attributed to Lancelot
Plate 14. Garry Owen House from the driveway. Garry Owen house is now the Sydney Writers Centre.

Plate 15. Plantings surrounding Garry Owen House.
Capability Brown and depicted in such influential publications as Dezallier d’Argenville’s *Theorie et Practique de Jardinage*, translated by John James in 1712, was to mark an important change in the design of English gardens (Bisgrove: 1990:60).

The use of the ha ha at Kirkbride reflects not only the practical concern with containing the patients within the hospital grounds, but also the desire of the architect, Barnet, to create a sensitive and Picturesque environment in which the flow of nature appears unimpeded. Ha has were built on two sides of the complex so as to afford the best view of the surrounding park and river.

Another device borrowed from the English garden employed in the layout of the Kirkbride grounds was the driveway designed to reveal glimpses of the main buildings as they are approached (Leong: 1985:13).

The formal gardens and grounds of Callan Park Psychiatric Hospital were laid out and plantings selected by Charles Moore, Curator of the Botanical Gardens (Leong: 1985:21). Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, a pioneer in the care of the mentally ill, and after whom the Kirkbride buildings were named, firmly believed that putting patients in touch with the natural world was a powerful recuperative strategy and that sanity could be restored through the healing powers of nature. He declared that:

“Every hospital should possess at least 100 acres of land, 50 acres, immediately around the buildings, should be appropriated as pleasure grounds...properly enclosed by an open palisade, as a park with various kinds of annuals or otherwise handsomely cultivated” (Leong: 1984:35).

The Callan Park gardens contained planted terraces, stones steps and low walled enclosures designed to create Picturesque pauses throughout the garden and to separate and elevate sections of the landscape. (Plts.16 and 17). More open sections of the gardens feature winding walkways planted on either side with a mixture of native and introduced plantings such as bamboo and various palms, intended to add visual variety and exotic interest. The original stone pathways are overgrown but still visible (Plt.18). Between the terraced section and the Kirkbride Block is the remains of the sunken garden, which is approached
Plate 16. Section of terraced garden, Callan Park.

Plate 17. Section of terraced garden, Callan Park
via a stone stair connecting it to the main southern entrance. This ruined garden has a magical quality arising from its similarity of form to the stone circles of ancient British and Irish landscapes (Plt.19).

The gardens created at neighbouring Broughton House are less “readable” as Picturesque landscape today because of the continued use and more recent development of the site. There has been a great deal of building activity in this part of the site since it became Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic in 1921. When Evan Jones became medical superintendent in 1923, he took great care to improve the design of the gardens. The Medical Journal of Australia, June, 1948 commends the foresight and the workmanship involved in the design and care of the gardens:

The stone, concrete and brickwork of the fountains, bridges and patios... are a lasting monument to those labourers and the perfect workmanship of the 1920s and 1930s. The landscaping of the grounds consisted of building hills where none had been, valleys, sunken gardens, streams, bridges and stone walls (Leong: 1984:74).

Damage to the original Broughton House by fire in 1980s has meant the neglect and loss of a large section of the gardens.

Plt.19a (Powell: 1986) shows the plan of the formal gardens surrounding the entrance to Broughton House during John Keep’s ownership of the property in c.1864, but none of this garden is visible today. However close by the area shown as lawn in this plan are the arbour featuring elaborate brickwork, a fountain and grotto and an avenue of cypresses. The exact date of the addition of the arbour is not known. Plates 20 and 21 illustrate various aspects of the rainforest garden which was an exotic addition to the park, featuring various species of rainforest trees, palms, ferns and bamboo. The “rainforest” is punctuated by winding paths, rock pools, small walled enclosures and a Japanese bridge.

In this ruined garden, a picturesque balance of rough and smooth is orchestrated between the Italianate arches and symmetry of the arbour and the “natural” untended appearance of the rainforest grottos.
Plate 18. Overgrown pathways and mature plantings, Callan Park.

Plate 19. Sunken garden, Callan Park.
Plate 19a. Plan of formal garden at Broughton Hall during the ownership of John Keep.
Plate 20. Section of the arbour, Broughton Hall.

Plate 21. Section of the rainforest wilderness at Broughton Hall.
These architectural elements of Picturesque garden design would possibly not be so noticeable in an English landscape but in Australia, their incorporation into the landscape functions as a more obvious means of translation of one landscape into another.

**RODD FAMILY TOMB**

The tomb was excavated from the sandstone outcrop of Rodd Point by convict labour in the nineteenth century. The precise date of the excavation is not known. Hand hewn from solid rock, the pick marks of the excavators are still clearly visible in the interior. The presence of the tomb extends the space of marking below the surface of the land.

The Rodd Point tomb, like the Boyne Valley tombs is a direct link to the past. The placement of the tomb at Rodd Point in the surrounding landscape echoes the placement of other tombs I have studied, in particular, Newgrange. The Rodd Point tomb is carved into the side of a small rise in the contour of the peninsular, giving the impression of a mound similar to those of the Boyne Valley. The placement of the tomb at the edge of the water is also reminiscent of the placement of Newgrange near the edge of the Boyne River. In both instances the notion of passage from one world to another is strongly evoked. The building and positioning of the Rodd Point tomb could be regarded as part of what Robert Layton describes as "remembrance rites"(Layton: 1992;126). In discussing the transference of certain Aboriginal patterns and ceremonies from mainland Australia to Bickerton Island, Layton suggests that these were simply part of a cultural practice which came with the people rather than sacred rites associated with the site. In this sense the building of Rodd Point tomb is also a remembrance rite. It is a cultural practice located in another landscape altogether yet performed at Iron Cove in a startlingly similar form to its Iron Age counterpart in Ireland.

Tombs evoke ideas of passage, and of changed states of being. Burial is also the final act of cultural insertion, which unites the self with the landscape symbolically and physically.

The carving of the Rodd family tomb into the landscape of Iron Cove represents an unconventional yet deliberate marking of the land. The appearance of the tomb and its monumental cross in the landscape is reminiscent of the burial practices of ancient Britain.
It is curiously out of keeping with the ordered gardens.

The tomb was excavated to a depth of approximately 1500mm below ground level. The vaulted ceiling constructed from sandstone most likely quarried on site was then built above the level of the rock to give a maximum ceiling height of approximately 2000mm. The arched entrance to the tomb is 1000x840mm with two steps leading down to the main interior. The vaulted interior space is approx. 3300mm wide and 4500mm deep. The cross, which stands on the top of the tomb, was carved from a single piece of sandstone and stands approximately 1850mm high atop a five tiered rough cut sandstone plinth. The iron grill gate at the entrance to the tomb bears the unusual Rodd family coat of arms (Plt.22). The coat of arms features a shield containing two shamrock like (Fox-Davis: 1969:201) three petalled shapes known as trefoil. Mounted on top of the shield is the figure of an archer holding an arrow in the right hand and holding aloft in the left hand, a grenade. Fox-Davis claims that the archer figure represents the Colossus of Rhodes (Fox-Davis: 1969:128). The family motto, Recte Omnia duce Deo is inscribed below the shield.

Eric Russell, local historian, reveals another version of the Rodd coat of arms on a pewter mug in the possession of a descendant. In this version a crescent shape is included in the top section of the shield. The crescent in this context is a differencing mark denoting the second son (Fox-Davis: 1969:217).

The tomb once held the embalmed bodies of members of the Rodd family (Plaque on site). The bodies and the cross were removed to Rookwood cemetery in 1903. In 1977 the Rotary Club of Five Dock restored the site and returned the cross (Russell: 1982:88-89). The carving of the tomb into the mound of Rodd Point is a prominent marking of the landscape of Iron Cove and one that is outside of the conventional markings of settlement in the area.

**SUMMARY**

My concerns with the documentation of both the systems of marking of the Iron Cove site have been in establishing a record of patterns of occupation within the area, with the
layering of markings and the evidence of human interaction with the land that this affords. Also, the poetic associations between this landscape and the landscape I experienced in Ireland are very strong. The presence of the Rodd Point tomb surrounded by water, recalls the burial sites of the Boyne and the engravings on the shoreline recall similar practices in the tombs and standing stones in my ancestral landscape.

The planting of the rainforest garden around the natural spring resembles the sacred wells and springs of ancient Celtic landscapes and the repeated circles and swirling spirals of the more formal sections of the garden design also have resonances with the la Tene maze patterns of Celtic art.

The imagery of boats and the association of water in both sites evoke for me a personal sense of longing implicit in the cultural experience of migration. These images expressed in the engraving of the land’s surface in Iron Cove suggest that this longing has been shared. The manipulation of the landscape of Iron Cove and the carvings along the foreshore are reminders of the efforts of European settlers to establish meaningful association with the new land in which they, for whatever reason, found themselves. While the intent of the garden designer is clear, the same is not so of the engraver. The people who made these marks in the landscape did so in a far more intimate, intense and singular fashion. Presuming the carvings were individually made, if not by the same person, suggests a more direct form of marking. The meanings of the carved images are not accessible in the same manner as the punctuations of the landscape architect, instead each carving continues to surprise, engage and disturb the viewer with its mystery. The carvings resonate with the melancholia of the indecipherable. The author/s of these marks is invisible, yet the carved images convey a profound sense of longing. Ships, compasses, enigmatic faces and fragments of names and dates evoke a nostalgia for a distant perhaps exotic past which is linked via the land’s surface with the present (Stewart: 1998:139-145).

By contrast, the ordering marks of the Picturesque in the Iron Cove landscape evidence the systems of privilege in operation in the colony at the time of their making. The gardens separate the "landed" Brenan, Keep and Rodd families from the anonymous carvers of the foreshore. The gentleman's parks of Iron Cove celebrate the colonial and European vision but the engravings of the foreshore suggest the exclusion to that vision, Aboriginals,
convicts, the insane. It is also quite likely that the anonymous labour of the convicts and masons was responsible for the elaborate gardens of these early estates but this labour remains invisible because it is not part of the rhetoric of colonialism.

To traverse these picturesque gardens one does so with a measured eye, moving from each feature to the next in a progressive movement. That is to say, one strolls, confidently, appreciatively. In this movement, the colonial sensibility is expressed. Here the fear that "the Australian landscape was not going to surrender itself to its new owners" (McLean: 1998:45) is overcome.

Plate 22. Rodd Family coat of arms on the door of the Rodd Point Tomb.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ANCESTRAL JOURNEY

In the previous two chapters I have examined the marking of the landscape through the investigation of colonial markings and in particular, in the site of Iron Cove. In this chapter my attention is focused on some of markings found in the landscape of Britain and Ireland. The markings within these landscapes demonstrate the importance of ritual, legend and place in the physical and spiritual experience of the land.

This chapter details my personal journey to Britain and Ireland undertaken in June /July 1996. In undertaking the journey to the landscape of Ireland, I hoped to gain some understanding of the place from which my ancestor, the convict Margaret Boyle, was expelled; to experience the physicality of the place, its forms and markings, and to understand something of the culture from which she was formed.

My journey was prompted by my experience of the landscape of Iron Cove but also by a re-examination of the rural society, ritual and religion, which punctuated and shaped my childhood in the landscape of northern New South Wales. This re-examination is included because the land was an important element in my maturation and the rituals associated with my practice of the Anglican religion were also strongly linked to the land. My relationship to the landscape as I grew up in it, was not about picturesque viewing but rather, about the strongly sensual experience of the land, such as walking barefoot behind a plough.

ANCESTRY

Like a great many Australians I am descended from Irish, English and Scottish stock. My maternal great grandmother came from Edinburgh and her husband from Essex. My maternal Grandfather was Irish and my paternal great great grandmother was a convict from Dublin. Yet, I did not grow up with any sense of history. The past, in our family, was something either forgotten or suppressed.

I do not imagine that this experience is unique, on the contrary, it is part of the collective
experience of migration, a means of dealing with the displacement that is experienced when the known is abandoned. The suppression of personal history is the deliberate reification through which the new and exotic are rendered familiar. As Paul Carter has pointed out, in moving from one place or time to another, the act of forgetting becomes for many, a mechanism of survival, a means of establishing a present through the denial of a past which does not or cannot comply (Carter: 1992:98-100). Part of that which is jettisoned in the process of constructing a new identity is often the spiritual connection to the landscape left behind.

For my convict ancestor, Margaret Boyle and her two children, as for very many others, banishment to the Antipodes meant severing forever, contact with the landscape of Ireland. What was lost in this separation was not just a sense of belonging within a national frame but a loss of meaning which was dependent upon a symbiotic relationship between land, language, ritual and religious or spiritual belief.

For the Anglo-Celtic settler in Australia, traditional forms of cultural expression which describe the relationship of people to the land, such as the seasonal festivals of the harvest, the Midsummer fire (Hutton: 1996:311-321) rituals of burning and cleansing, and patterns of song and dance such as the Morris Dance, were altered by the inversion of the seasonal calendar, to begin with, but also, through lack of contact with the familiar landscape in which the predicted responses were known. iii

RITUAL

Despite the enormous changes in the rhythms and patterns of social life in England and Ireland, as a consequence of Industrialization, contact with the rhythms of the landscape and the seasons was retained through the continued observance of rites and festivals such as Lughnasa and Beltane, which were observed and celebrated in towns as well as in the countryside. These rituals were subsumed and in part preserved by the Christian Church. Ronald Hutton in, Stations of the Sun. A History of the Ritual Year in Britain, gives an account of the integration of the agricultural calendar with the Roman church calendar through such events as Ragotientide and Pentecost.
For the descendants of Anglo-Celtic immigrants, like myself, the Anglican Church was the
custodian of the ancestral culture and landscape.

A Hymn for Rogation Days (the three days before Ascension in which prayers and
supplications are made in procession) from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer
(c.1959:147) evokes an ancestral landscape of ceremonial water and fire:

The powers of earth for all her ills
An endless treasure yield
The precious things of the ancient hills
Forest and fruitful field...

And as, when ebbed the flood, our sires
Kneel’d on the mountain sod,
While all the new world’s altar fires
Shone out the bow of God...

Although I grew up in a small country town in northern New South Wales in which the
Harvest Festival was celebrated in the Church and the Maypole danced at school, (Plts.23a
and 23b) I was not to realize the significance of these rituals for some years. They were
simply the things one did, part of the way life was lived.

By the time I reached adulthood, these land-based activities had been replaced by
American cultural forms such as rock and roll music, television and cinema. In addition, the
sub-division of rural land and the breaking up of farms, further fragmented the unity of
religion, ritual and social life.

The rituals of country childhood, the harvest festival, the hymns, the bonfires and the
maypole, I now see as the last vestiges of an ancestral culture, which had been transposed
to the landscape of Australia. These cultural practices had survived the encroachment of
Plate 23a. Decorated altar at St. Andrew's Church of England, Lismore. (Photograph courtesy of Richmond River Historical Society)

Plate 23b. Maypole, near Lismore. (Photograph courtesy of Richmond River Historical Society)
modern consumer culture only through the relative isolation of the rural location.

What I as a child, had experienced as a life lived in harmony with the landscape, was in fact an attempt to re-create an indigenous relationship with the land, which belonged to a different landscape and time. These rituals belonged to a different hemisphere. To conceptualize a European ritual culture in the landscape and calendar of Australia, in retrospect, did not make sense. To dance the spring ritual of the maypole as the landscape descended into winter and to burn the midsummer bonfire in midwinter, merely accentuated the attempted transposition, by my Anglo-Celtic forebears, of their culture of origin.

PLACE

In the last decade in Australia, the relationship of indigenous people to the landscape has received greater attention in scholarship, visual arts, music and film and, as a consequence, Anglo-Celtic Australians have become increasingly aware of the spiritual, historical and physical connection which Aboriginal people have to the landscape of this country. Aboriginal creation myths and the bonds of belonging are explained by the topology of the land (Sutton: 1988:19, Carter: 1988:346) and expressed through song, dance and the marks of ceremony made upon it. Furthermore, in contrast to my experience of Anglo-Celtic ritual, Aboriginal narrative, song and ritual are site specific. It is place rather than time (Healy: 1998:56) which positions and orientates the telling of histories and codifies meaning.

The significance of place in Anglo-Celtic colonial Australia was predicated on likeness, rather than specifics. If a landscape could be said to be “like a gentleman’s park”, for instance, then this was acceptable substitute for the real (remembered landscape). Cultural practices, ritual and religious beliefs, which had evolved out of the landscape of Britain and Ireland, were applied to the landscape of Australia indiscriminately. Suitable places, places that could be adapted to the spiritual and physical needs of the emigrants were substituted for the actual places, the places of the ancestral landscape.

It was this awareness of the relationship between landscape and ancestry, which provoked
the desire to visit and to experience the landscape which had once been "home" to my ancestors, hoping to find in the topology and marking of that landscape, signs of those old rituals which I had only experienced through a post-colonial modification of the form.

THE JOURNEY

Before I embarked on this journey I remember looking at pictures of ancient earthworks in which a man stands in what appears to be a ditch or at the foot of a small hill. What one cannot imagine from these photographs held in the hand, is the size of the constructed landscapes depicted. Even given the scale of the human figure in these images does not prepare one for the immensity of these constructions within the landscape.

On my first visit to the coastline of South Wales, I failed to see the hill fort that I was walking on until I had walked some distance away from it and looked back. As I did so, I had the disquieting sensation that the ground under me was somehow alive, that it might at any moment move like Gulliver, beneath my Lilliputian step.

Susan Stewart argues that the gigantic "becomes an explanation for the environment, a figure on the interface between the natural and the human" (Stewart: 1998:71). This explains the tendency to assign human anatomical form and function to parts of the topology, such as foothills and mouths of rivers. But what is articulated through the imposition of the giant body in the landscape is confined to language, it does not entirely explain the sensation of traversing such a landscape, because, we know, in these constructed landscapes that the mounds and "valleys" were not put there by giants or gods, but by people.

Similarly, in the British Isles and Ireland particularly, the activities of giants are given as explanations for natural phenomena (Op.cit. 71-72). These explanations become the creation myths associated with particular places but they also become part of the collective mythology, which defines a cultural group or tradition.

While it is part of the function of mythology (and religion) to explain phenomena, mythology and religion also determine aspects of behaviour. Our attitude to the land and
the way in which we walk across it for instance, have been subtly formulated by what we have come to believe about the landscape and its creation. The constructed landscape is negotiated in a different manner to the unmarked landscape of the wilderness (Ch.1), for instance. Confusion arises when the constructed landscape appears as wilderness. The hill fort, because of its enormity, disguises itself as rugged landscape (Lippard: 1983:12).

What is so difficult to “see” in the ancient human-made landscapes of Britain and Ireland, are the marks you know to be there.

RETURN TO THE SOURCE

In *Reconstructing Archaeology*, Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley observed that:

In the attempt to understand the past we have to open ourselves up to it and the claims to truth which reside in that which we study, truth claims which only we the interpreters, can bring out and emphasize. This is not the truth of empiricism nor does it imply an act of empathy. What it does mean is that we situate our opinions, ideas, presuppositions, fore-knowledge, our presentism, in relation to the past. We cannot purge ourselves of values but these can be productively mediated by that which we study. It is impossible to radically bracket off the self. (Shanks and Tilley: 1992:106)

What is often remarked upon by visitors from Australia and the new world, to the landscape of Britain and Ireland, is the feeling of walking through history (Lippard: 1983:1-13). To the unaccustomed, the seemlessness of the lived-in landscape of Britain and Ireland can be jolting. Throughout the British and Irish landscapes ancient and medieval monuments appear in the midst of contemporary life and cultural practice. A high cross might burst from amidst a herd of Friesians, sheep graze freely in the ruins of monasteries and over prehistoric burial mounds, roadside signs point casually to Neolithic sites - “prehistory this way”.

In making the journey to Ireland, I had to situate myself in relation to a cultural past which I had not experienced but which I had taken part in through religion and ritual, since
childhood. At the same time, I was returning to the source of that cultural past by returning to the landscape of my convict ancestor.

My investigation of topology was concentrated on the landscape surrounding my ancestor’s birthplace, Dublin, and in one particular site, that of the megalithic tombs of the Boyne Valley, in County Meath, Ireland, about forty miles to the north of Dublin.

The Boyne Valley is significant in Irish history and culture, not only as the site of the tragic battle of 1690 in which Irish supporters of the catholic King James II were defeated by William of Orange, thus establishing a period of English occupation and domination, but as an important centre of Irish culture reaching back to the Bronze Age and beyond. Passage tombs in the Boyne Valley pre-date the fall of Troy and the Egyptian pyramids (Bhreathnach and Newman: 1995:30-31).

On a ridge of hills overlooking the Boyne River, are found three burial sites dating to the third millennium BC, at Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange. Twenty kilometres to the southwest, on another bend of the Boyne, is the Hill of Tara, legendary seat of the ancient kings of Ireland. The markings and remnants of ancient settlement, burial ritual and seats of power and influence are plentiful throughout this landscape.

Within three kilometres of each other are found three burial sites dating back to 3000BC at Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange. All three feature passage tombs containing elaborate rock carvings both in the interiors and in the surrounding kerbstones. Spirals, chevrons, concentric circles and ovoids, zig-zags and cup and ring markings feature prominently in the carved patterns.

Dowth is a large mound eighty five metres in diameter and originally about sixteen metres high, containing two passage tombs (Harbison: 1994:66). Knowth is larger, containing an oval mound varying in diameter from eighty to ninety five metres. It is almost ten metres high and covers an area of point four hectares.

The third of these important sites is the huge and recently restored mound of Newgrange, situated high on a hill overlooking a bend in the Boyne river, from which it takes its
name, Bru’ na Boinne. Newgrange measures on average one hundred and three metres in
diameter and over thirteen metres in height. (Harbison: 1994:73). The huge mound contains
only one passage tomb measuring approximately twenty four metres in length. On the
winter solstice (21st December), the sun’s rays enter through the roof box of the Newgrange
tomb and pass along the passage to fall on the central recess of the burial chamber. This
phenomenon occurs only once a year and lasts for a mere fifteen to twenty minutes (Plt.24).
The roof of the burial chamber features stones, intricately carved with zig-zags, chevrons,
spirals and circles.

These three cairns and their immediate satellites contain more than six hundred decorated
stones (O’Sullivan: 1993:14). The origins and meaning of the carvings are disputed, just as
the carvings at Iron Cove, but there is a distinct style associated with this area and period
such that “Boyne Valley style” is an emerging phrase in archaeological discourse (Plt.25).

Dr. Muiris O’Sullivan of University College, Dublin, goes so far as to claim that:

“The blend of genius and international influences that drove the Boyne Valley artists to
dizzying heights of creativity was not repeated on a large scale anywhere else in
Ireland” (O’Sullivan: 1993:26).

Dr. Neil L. Thomas has speculated that the megalithic art of the Boyne Valley was
illustrative of astrological theory and belief. Certainly the orientation of the tombs in
relation to the winter solstice would seem to support such contentions. Dr. Thomas has
constructed an elaborate lexicon of symbols and signs extracted from the carvings, which
can be read as narrative calendars, describing the measurement and passage of time in the
ancient Celtic world. (Thomas: 1998)

The forms and symbols of the Boyne Valley style are reminiscent in many respects, of
megalithic rock art, which occurs throughout Ireland, Wales, Scotland and Brittany. Spirals,
zig-zags, chevrons and continuous serpent-like scrolling lines, circles and cup marks occur
frequently. However, the Boyne Valley carvings are distinct in their complexity and in
what Mauriris O’Sullivan identifies as a plastic quality. By “plastic” he means the carved
designs take account of the shape of the rock surface. This is particularly apparent in the
Plate.24. Interior Newgrange burial tomb on winter solstice.
Newgrange entrance stone (Plt.26) where the waving lines describe the contour of the rock base and the radiating lines at the top of the stone suggests that the designs continue to follow the shape of the stone beyond, and is in fact enhanced by the shape of the stone itself. (O’Sullivan: 1993:17-23). This is a quality O’Sullivan suggests is unique to the Boyne Valley, and indeed, when it does very rarely occur elsewhere, the quality is compared or attributed to the Boyne Valley as with the Pierowall Stone from Orkney, Scotland (Richie: 1994:26).

The effort required to construct these monuments was considerable, given the relatively primitive nature of available tools, and the severity of the winter climate. It must therefore have been a task of some importance to the people who built these tombs, suggesting that great emphasis was placed on the ritual of burial. Jewelry and ceramic fragments found in the tombs together with the elaborate artwork of their interiors also suggests a strong belief in the existence of the otherworld or afterlife.

Though miniscule in comparison, the Iron Cove tomb is similarly situated in a prominent position, symbolically, at the water’s edge. Constructed by the invisible labour of convicts, using simple tools, this monument too reflects the effort and the perceived importance of its construction.

Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth are within twenty kilometres of another important earthwork, the Hill of Tara. (Plt.27). The dominant monuments at Tara consist of the huge encompassing Raith na Rig (Fort of the Kings) which encloses the smaller conjoined earthworks of the Forrad and Tech Cormaic. Tech Cormaic is approximately seventy metres in diameter and joined to the east side of the somewhat larger ring fort, called the Forrad. In the centre of the Forrad stands the Lia Fail (stone of destiny) associated with the legitimating of the Irish kingship and represented at Tara today in the form of a smooth phallic shaped stone, approximately two metres high. The Lia Fail was moved to this position from its original site near the Mound of Hostages in 1798 and erected as a memorial to those who fell in the Rebellion of that year (Bhreathnach and Newman: 1995:42).

It is impossible to separate these ancient monuments from the legends which are associated
Plate 26. Entrance stone at Newgrange, County Meath, Ireland.

Plate 27. The Hill of Tara, County Meath, Ireland.
with them since they all feature prominently in the creation and invasion myths of the Irish. The voice of the omnipotent god Lug, for instance, is believed to sound in the Lia Fail in support of the legitimate king (Bhreathnach and Newman: 1995:15). Likewise, Newgrange is believed to be the home of a race of subterranean, supernatural beings, the Tuatha de Danann, the “people of the goddess Danu” (Harbison: 1994:73) as well as the burial place of the prehistoric kings of Tara. The Tuatha de Danann was a divine race of gods who occupied Ireland before the Gaels and who, dispossessed by them, created an Otherworld kingdom beneath the earth. (Green: 1995:82) The River Boyne itself takes its name from the legend of a goddess, Boann. According to the legend, the river was formed when the waters of a well rose up and overwhelmed Boann as punishment for disobeying her husband (Op. Cit: 83).

The landscape of Tara is so physically overpowering and so defined by history and legend, that it is impossible to view in any conventional picturesque sense, from within. When one finds oneself standing in the centre of the Forrad, one is overwhelmed by the landscape to the extent that it is no longer possible to actually see the topography in which you stand. Although the rings of Tara are human made, they do not suggest human scale. They are not manageable within the field of human vision. Unlike the manipulation of the landscape in the nineteenth century Picturesque, the land markings at Tara do not offer an orchestrated and measured passage but rather, a sense of containment within the form of the landscape; of being “in” the landscape in a manner I could only imagine to approach an indigenous experience. The narrative of legend is therefore the only available map with which to negotiate this ground. This manner of negotiation and understanding of the landscape requires the suspension of the picturesque frame. The way into this landscape is not obvious and there is no picturesque point of view. This landscape does not celebrate the genius of the individual viewer neither is it particularly welcoming. It is a landscape shaped and formed by human history and belief but exoticised by time, and for the returning emigrant, also by distance. There is no option than to surrender to the landscape and to accept that in being there, you are a miniscule fragment of the history that defines the place.

The Boyne Valley landscape had additional significance for me. As the landscape of my distant ancestor, part of my identity was also here. As I walked down the main street of the village of Slane, near Tara, my head resounding with the legends of the great Irish kings of
the Ui Neill, I looked up to see a sign painted above a shop front which read, “Boyles Tea Rooms”. O’Neill and Boyle are common names in Ireland; they are also the names of my maternal great grandmother and my convict ancestor respectively, and to be walking in the landscape in which their names were so strongly entwined, gave me a curious sense of continuity.

OBJECTS

The first days of my quest were spent among collections of exquisite prehistoric golden torcs, delicate lunae and votive offerings, funery urns, illuminated manuscripts, carved stones and the remnants of boats, weapons, even human beings. Apart from some of the carved stones which remained in situ, and around which life seemed to flow unimpeded, the majority of these artifacts were housed in museums, the British Museum in London and the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin, in particular.

Whilst the contemplation of these objects could not but arouse intense wonderment and awe they were not readily comprehensible as experience because the nature of the museum and the conventions of display, reduce artifacts to facts. Because of their containment within the museum display case, the beauty, function and value of these objects within the social context of their manufacture, could no longer be understood, only imagined.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to approach the remnants of any culture without imposing our own cultural vision upon it (Shanks and Tilley: 1992:106). The artifact which appears in the museum case represents not only the culture from which it was exhumed but also and in equal measure the culture which removed it from its place in the landscape and placed it in a glass box.

Furthermore, as Susan Stewart has observed, the museum’s claim to objectivity is challenged by the classification systems of collectors and curators (Stewart: 1993:161-162).

In the absence of the landscape in which these objects were produced, or from which they
were wrought, or indeed, in which they were discovered, their meaning was modified. Although they had been singled out from the world of objects and given the status of signifiers, the “truth” of these objects could not be known in isolation from the material world (Shanks and Tilley: 1992). The museum becomes the container of longing, a world of objects presented “objectively”, outside lived experience, yet charged with the task of uniting past and present within the space of private viewing.

Their power was in their capacity to evoke a past and a culture, which was simultaneously glorious and simple, coherent and turbulent. Their silence within the museum case resonated with the imagined noise of their origin and with the use value once assigned to them but now removed.

In looking at these objects, the past is fleetingly present but is never accessible. What is more, the place of origin, the past, must remain unattainable in order to sustain the magic and the desire which surrounds these beautiful relics (Stewart: 1993:151).

One object of all the thousands I looked at, had a profound impact upon me. It was a tiny golden boat, part of a hoard retrieved from the riverbank at Broighter in County Derry, and now housed in the National Museum of Ireland, in Dublin. Possibly intended as a votive offering to the Celtic sea god Manannan Mac Lir (Harbison: 1994:178) this tiny vessel was symbolic of my journey, the journey of my ancestors and of so many Irish people who left their homeland, as convicts, economic and political refugees, or as adventurers like John Ryan Brenan of Garry Owen (Ch.3). The fragility of this small boat was a reminder of the enormity of the quest it represented. The Broighter boat has become a recurring image in my studio work.

The journey to Ireland allowed me to make contact with an ancestral past and to re-absorb the past of my Australian childhood. Out of this diasporic reverie has come a pictorial language based on significant objects and patterns encountered in Ireland and re-presented in my art practice in Australia.
Plate 28. Golden boat, a votive offering, from Broighter, County Derry, now in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.
CHAPTER FIVE
COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

In this chapter, the significance of my circular journey from the landscape of Iron Cove to the ancient landscape of the Boyne Valley, and back again, is integrated with my studio practice. These two landscapes are brought together in my work, through the use of a pictorial language derived from a re-ordering and re-positioning of the marks, imagery and poetic resonances found in both landscapes. Furthermore, in visiting my ancestral landscape, I completed the journey of my convict ancestor, Margaret Boyle, and at the same time embarked upon the first half of my own journey of discovery.

As I have argued throughout this thesis, the marking of the land is a potent means through which ideas of self, of personal and cultural identity as well as attitudes to place, are expressed. The migratory journey is a defining moment in the construction of these ideas, particularly in societies such as ours in Australia, which has been formed out of a colonizing ethos. In the marks made by Anglo-Celtic emigrants upon the alien soil of colonial Australia, the needs of settlement, the aesthetic of ownership and Empire as well as the longing for the more familiar landscape of home, were made visible. For the descendants of these first colonizers, the diaspora of a post-colonial Anglo-Celtic identity in Australia reveals itself in contemporary arts practice and in a pre-occupation with re-locating and re-defining the past.

I have centred my investigations on two landscapes which have been formative in my own attempts to re-locate and re-define my past. Through my documentation of the Iron Cove site I have gained a deeper understanding of the markings which have transformed and re-ordered that landscape, reflecting the needs, desires and sensibilities of the people who lived in it, both indigenous and European. It is in the making of the marks, as much as in the marks themselves that the expression of need, desire, and sensibility resides. In my studio work, I have tried to make visible these qualities which the carvings and ruined gardens of Iron Cove, and the Boyne Valley tomb carvings contain.

My journey to Britain and Ireland has given a scope and depth to my work, which could
not have developed without that contact. The gigantic scale of the ancient earthworks, the complexity of carved stones and burial monuments and the association of legend with the topology could not have been understood, indeed approached in any meaningful way, without having been experienced. It was necessary to my creative process to attempt to experience this landscape from the same perspective as I had experienced the landscape of my rural childhood. The view from "behind the plough" is important to me because in this form of marking the landscape, the relationship of my ancestors to the Australian environment had been expressed over some five generations. Their need to survive and to work with the new landscape is expressed through the practices of cultivation, which they brought with them from their homeland. The warm scent of the turned earth is still a strong memory to me. It is this sensual hands-on relationship with the earth that governs to a large extent the way I still look at the ground today; "in the eye", as Richard Long suggests. In walking along the "furrows" of the great earthworks such as those of Maiden Castle and in particular, the Hill of Tara, the sensuous recall between that landscape and the ploughed fields of childhood was overpowering. Experiencing Tara gave the remembered experiences of childhood the context they lacked.

In returning to this landscape of my ancestors, in being "in" this ancient landscape, however briefly and however tenuously, I experienced a sense of that continuum of which Marion Borgelt speaks where indeed "yesterday is incorporated into today" (Borgelt: 1998:26). Furthermore, through positioning myself within an ancestral landscape, I was able to develop a repertoire of expressive means, which helped me to visually articulate this experience. This repertoire included the development of a personal narrative, a symbolic visual language, and a re-ordering of picturesque devices. These investigative facilities assisted me in dealing with the legacies of a postcolonial existence in the topography of Australia, a topology which does not contain my ancestral mythology.

In the location and remnants of burial rituals in both landscapes, in the carving of rocks, in the existence of fortifications, and in particular in the significance of water in both locations, I have been able to make contact in a poetic sense with a Celtic ancestry. The water's edge, the well and the river were sacred places to the ancient Celts. As Miranda Green observes in her study of ancient Celtic religions:
Watery places were especially sacred to the Celts, who perceived them as being intensely numinous. Rivers were seen as the foci of the life-force. Water represented liminal space, locations at the interface of the earthly and supernatural worlds. Such places were perilous and unstable but because they were gateways between worlds, communication with the spirit world was easier than elsewhere (Green: 1995:89-90).

In the narrative of my painting, water is the gateway for me between the Iron Cove landscape and my ancestral landscape of the Boyne Valley. The references to water and navigation which occur in the imagery of the Iron Cove carvings serve to reinforce the importance of this association. Water was at the same time the most important visual, historical and aesthetic link between the landscapes of the old world and the new in the experience of white emigrants, like my ancestors, to colonial Australia. Water and oceans are also seminal metaphors in the construction of a contemporary Australian consciousness and I confess an affinity with Ian McLean when he writes:

Australia's antipodality is a sign of its oceanic origins. Like ocean, the Antipodean never becomes, never is, but is condemned to a perpetual becoming, a constitutional rootlessness and mobility, an in-between-ness. But Australians are ordinary people. Most of them do not seek oceans to traverse, or fabulous quests, but only a destination, a place. Like all on the advent of subjectivity, Australians yearn to escape their watery origins and simply be (McLean: 1998:6).

Although the dilemma remains, that my ancestral stories are not located in this continent, nevertheless, through completing my own circular journey to Ireland and back, I have developed a deeper awareness of the displacement and longing which is fundamental to the migratory experience. At the same time I feel I have been able to confront my own "antipodality" through this sense of circularity, and, in positioning myself in relation to an ancient Celtic past, to realise the contemporaiety of my own life.

READING THE LAND EXHIBITION

My recent work, represented in the Reading the Land exhibition, appropriates the symbolic
Plate.30. Rock Face. Graphite and pastel on paper, 80cms x 145cms, 1998
Plate.32. Fish. Graphite and pastel on paper, 80cms x 145cms, 1997.
markings of an ancient ancestral landscape and re-positions them within a post-modern practice. The processes of inscription in the landscape, which I studied at Iron Cove and in Ireland are combined with the traditional materials of picture marking, paint, canvas, paper and clay. Picturesque selection in the development of imagery is a response to my desire to develop a narrative language which is both personal, and, communicative of a Celtic past within a contemporary Australian present.

In re-aligning the marks and symbols found in the landscapes of Iron Cove and the Boyne Valley, new images emerge which are representative of my space and time. The process of making is vital to this transition. The marks I make in the process of drawing repeat the marks I saw on the carved stones of the Boyne Valley tombs. The tonal quality of each drawing is made up of repeated zig-zag lines, spirals and chevrons. Likewise the texture and tonal treatment of the paintings is achieved through the repetition of the markings I found in the Boyne Valley stones. This repetition, carried out with a number one brush on a canvas measuring 180 x120 centimetres, is a somewhat mesmeric experience, the visual equivalent of chanting a mantra. The making of the work in this painstaking and time-consuming manner is an act of reverence. I acknowledge the sacred quality of the ancient markings through this treatment which searches for narrative and meaning within the gesture of the mark. This process affords me the time in which to imagine the original process of marking and to experience art making as the domain of ritual practice.

Through this process, the marks have become a language that I can use to extract meaning. The image that emerges from the raw surface of paper or canvas is made up of the symbols, marks and patterns of this new language. Traces of Ogham, the ancient written language of the Celtic people of Britain and Ireland also appear in the painted and drawn surfaces of my work. These marks have meaning for me. They are the language of my ancestors and although I may not know their original meaning, by repeatedly making these marks I have established a ritual of personal usage.

The imagery of the drawings is based upon fragments of the carved patterns of the Boyne Valley stones and the rock engravings on the shores of Iron Cove. The drawings, Boat Woman (Plt.29) Rock Face (Plt.30) Ship of Stone (Plt.31) Fish (Plt.32) and God the Builder (Plt.33) refer to rock engravings found on the foreshores of Iron Cove, whilst
Newgrange (Plt.34) and Trinity (Plt.35) repeat fragments of the carved surfaces of the huge stones in the Newgrange and Knowth burial mounds. (Plt.36). It is important that the patterns and images in these drawings are transcribed faithfully to allow for a narrative interpretation. The works combine my personal language, the language of the repeated mark with the readable image that results. This process is reminiscent of that employed in the carving of the story stones carved by Christian Celts used to impart the scriptures to illiterate converts. Indeed, it is the same process used by pre-Christian Celts in the carving of the Newgrange stones, or by the artists of Iron Cove. In the same way that these unknown artists pecked away at the surface of the land in order to make their "stories" visible, so I extract my narrative from the surface of the canvas through the repetition of the painted mark. In this way, my narrative is made visible to the viewer without the picturesque celebration of the self, the perceiving eye.

The narrative of migration is central in the large painting, Resurrection, for example. The imagery depicted in Resurrection (Plt.37) brings together the two burial sites, that at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley and the Rodd Point tomb on Iron Cove. The two larger panels in this work represent the interior of the burial chamber at Newgrange, on the left, and the entrance to the Rodd Point tomb on the right. The funerary altar of the Newgrange panel represents the starting point of the journey from the old world to the new or from the known to the unknown, the familiar to the alien. The centre panel represents the passage by water, to the “Otherworld”, or the new. The image of the Rodd Point tomb represents both the destination, and, in the open door to the tomb, the suggestion of another beginning or another journey. I have taken the images of these tombs and used them to tell my own story of migration as well as that of my ancestors. The symbolic markings which make up the technical means of creating the work functions as another layering of narrative, in this case, a personal ritual narrative.

The presence of tombs in both landscapes is suggestive of journeys, of otherworld spaces and of ritual association with the earth, cycles of birth, death and renewal. The boat which features in the centre panel of Resurrection and in the painting Passage, is based on the form of a tiny golden boat, a votive offering from Broighter, County Derry, now in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. The boat is symbolic of the journey to the other worlds, both real and imagined; of the passage of immigrants both forced and free, to the

Plate.34. Newgrange. Oil on Canvas, 120cms x 120cms, 1998
Plate 35. Trinity. Oil on Canvas, 120cms x 120cms, 1998

Plate 36. Interior of Newgrange burial mound, County Meath, Ireland.
Antipodean world, and of the imagined passage to the world beyond this one. The sailing boat is also one of the repeated motifs in the rock engravings of Iron Cove, and a potent and multi-layered sign. Frozen in full sail in the carved surface of the foreshore, the sailing boat is symbolic of exile for the convict, of separation and longing for the free settler and convict alike, and the symbol of invasion to the indigenous people.

The ceramics works in the exhibition function as souvenirs. They are the manufactured memories of real objects encountered in collections and in the landscape of Britain and Ireland. These objects included fragments of carved stones, votive offerings, funerary urns, Sheela-na-gig figures, shards of beaker pottery, carved decorations on churches and in stone circles. My reconstructed ceramic fragments are my memories of the places I travelled through. They are reminders of the stone circles and churchyards, of the rows of stone fragments collected from the countryside and assembled in a barn in South Wales or the collection of ancient Ogham stones housed in the cloisters of the University of Cork. At the same time, my "fragments" also serve to signify a past and a culture that has itself been fragmented by the effects of conflict, industrialization and migration.

I also set out to bring together aspects of the objects I studied, their markings, shape and texture with the substance of the land and the landscapes I encountered. For example, the piece entitled Circle of Friends (Plt.38) reconstructs, through the repeated form of tiny ceramic heads, the circles that appear in the landscape of the Boyne Valley at Tara, and in the carved stones of Newgrange. The form of the ceramic heads recalls the startling discovery of a stone head I found propped casually against a curb at the entrance to Sankill Castle, in Ireland (Pl.42). Curiously, on my return to Iron Cove, I found a further rock carving of a profile head, (Frontpiece) which I had not encountered in my previous documentation.

The head is of great significance in Celtic art and legend. Certain Celtic peoples were thought to have taken human heads as trophies (Green: 1995, Harbison: 1994). Headless burials were common in Iron Age Europe and the reasons for this practice embrace various speculations including the notion of decapitation being part of a ritual of passage to the Otherworld. Other explanations suggest that the head, being the source of knowledge and healing, especially in the case of the female, was kept after death, or buried separately to
Plate 37. Resurrection. Oil on Canvas, 181cms x 279cms. 1998

Plate 38. Circle of Friends. Ceramic pieces arranged on wall, 180cms x 180cms. 1998
Plate.39. Pieces from the Men Scryfys # 3 Series. Oil and mixed media on layered paper, each image is 5cms x 5cms approx. 1998.

Plate 41. Icons. Oil on Canvas, 4 panels each comprising four canvases, each panel 39cms x 50cms. 1998.
Plate 42. Stone head fragment, on the curbside near Sankill Castle, Ireland.
retain its power (Green: 1995:153-156).

Working with clay is important to my sense of contact with the earth. This process of moulding and constructing forms from the raw substance of the earth is both a sensual expression of my relationship with the land and symbolic of the construction of history through the reconstruction of the relic. The fragments of field monuments which I construct recall the fragments of Iron Age constructions and in the process of their construction I express my need for contact with a distant past.

The miniature landscapes in the Men Scryfus Series #3 (Plt.39) are meant to remind us of how memory is both fragmented and at the same time made more precious by the experience of migration. The scale of these images prevents a conventional picturesque reading. Instead, the viewer must approach the picture surface in an almost forensic relationship in order to decipher the imagery, texture and surface of the picture. The viewer is physically drawn into these “landscapes” as one might be drawn into a magnified image under a microscope, or into the palm of their own hand. In provoking an unconventional reading such as this it was my intention to force the viewer into an intimate relationship with both the art object and the landscape it represents. This relationship requires the abandonment of picturesque knowledge in favour of a reverent, investigative and contemplative approach. Furthermore, their tiny scale is intended to give these miniatures landscapes the status of keepsakes, objects that might have been saved and treasured from a previous location or moment (Stewart: 1998:135-136). The processes of making are again important, although quite different to that employed in the making of the larger works. The miniatures are built up by gluing and laminating tiny pieces of paper and cloth together. This layering recalls the layering of marks within the landscape as successive cultural insertions are made, and also the layering of personal memory. They are pieced together as the past is pieced together through combining fragments of material information, recollections and impressions. Elements are added and changed and the surfaces that result, like our knowledge of the past, are the combination of all these manipulations. Furthermore, unlike the conventional picturesque stance of the painter, these works are handled as one would handle a pottery shard or a small stone held in the hand. They are enclosed by my body in the course of their making.
The recurring profile face in these tiny images is the unknown profile carved into the rock surface of Iron Cove (Plt. 1, frontpiece); it is also the face of the carver, the convict, the emigrant intruder in the landscape, the sacred Celtic head. It is simultaneously the self and the “other”.

In transmitting ancient symbols into a contemporary setting, my work is in some respects, comparable to that of contemporary indigenous artists who have lost all ties to traditional lands and who seek to rediscover and to re-invoke ancient visual (and oral) languages. Judy Watson’s journey to the land of her grandmother (Morrell, T and Barratt, L: 1992) which had been rendered unfamiliar through forced migration, reflects my journey to a landscape which held my ancestral identity, but which was unfamiliar to me. My relocation of ancestral marks in this context, is not dissimilar to hers.

Similar resonances occur between my work and that of Geoff Levitus. Although Levitus’ work is formally quite different to mine, his concerns with the difficult and complex relationship between the white Australians and the landscape of Australia is familiar. For Levitus however, there is no meaningful meeting between the two. In his anguished expressionist compositions, the figure hovers above the landscape, unable to fit upright within it. These works are imbued with a melancholy which I recognize in my own need to find personal meaning in the Australian landscape.

Judy Watson’s work seeks to reclaim and restate both her Aboriginal past and her Aboriginal identity while Geoff Levitus recognizes the absence of a similar history for white emigrants in Australia and the diaspora of contemporary white Australian experience. My work seeks to rediscover a Celtic past and to situate that past within a framework of contemporary Australian cultural life and landscape. What we all desire and seek to express is a sense of history. This sense of history explains the present for us, gives our existence meaning by situating us in a cultural continuum which unites self and place. Furthermore, a sense of the past is essential to our well-being (Lowenthal: 1988:185). Without an awareness of the past our present lacks form.

My work is also indebted to the extraordinarily probing work of Gordon Bennett. Bennett appropriates imagery from within the established picturesque tradition of Australian
landscape representation and overlays these images with the marks of Aboriginal visual language. In addition, by manipulating European perspective, Bennett is able to occupy a middle ground between the colonial vision and the reality of indigenous displacement. My work also seeks a middle ground, a space where my Celtic ancestry can engage with my contemporary positioning. To compare my work to Bennett's might appear a gross impertinence on my part since in the indigenous history of Australia, I am not supposed to be here. But colonization has given us a shared Anglo-Celtic ancestry, which I would claim is also displaced in its relationship to the landscape of this country.

For Judy Watson, Geoff Levitus, Gordon Bennett and myself, as well as for other artists discussed earlier, in particular, John Wolseley, Mandy Martin and Richard Long, the land is primary. It is through a relationship with the land that the past is rediscovered and a sense of personal history is made possible.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of my work is in its power to revive forgotten Celtic cultures in Australia whilst recognizing the inappropriate practices which Anglo-Celtic cultures have introduced into this landscape in their attempts to find or to make a place within it. My ancestors were part of the process of colonization, which transformed the surface of the land of Australia. The marks that were made by white emigrants on and in the Australian landscape, including the picturesque orchestrations of large expanses of land, were part of the inscription of Anglo-Celtic belief and social practice from which I descended. In recognizing my descent in this way, my work does not re-affirm the colonizing aesthetic of the picturesque, but rather, looks towards a new and more meaningful visual narrative.

In my work the remembered landscape of my childhood in Australia and the ritual landscape of my ancestors in Ireland are contextualized together with my experience of the contemporary landscape of Iron Cove. In this way my work represents an important re-working of cultural sources which takes account of the vital role played by the past in the construction of contemporary identity, and seeks to develop a new visual language which responds to the needs of Anglo-Celtic Australians to situate themselves within the landscape of their adopted country.
As part of a broader spectrum of Australian art which deals with issues of personal memory, personal history and identity, my work provides a further extension of meaning and a new approach to the reconciliation of self with place and history. By engaging with the marking of the land and in responding to the impulses which prompt the marking of the land, I have developed a visual language which can confront and give meaning to the Celtic diaspora in Australia. In the context of contemporary arts practice in Australia my work is a significant contribution to the ongoing investigation of these concerns.

Remembering the past is crucial for our sense of identity. To know what we were confirms that we are. As David Lowenthal writes:

> Self-continuity depends wholly on memory; recalling past experiences links us to our earlier selves, however different we may since have become. (Lowenthal: 1988:197).
READING THE LAND EXHIBITION
PROJECT CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART - WOLLONGONG
27th OCTOBER - 15th NOVEMBER, 1998

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

1. Newgrange Kerbstone. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms
2. Rock Face, Iron Cove. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms (Pl.30)
3. Knowth Stone. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms
4. Ship of Stone. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145 cms (Pl.31)
5. Fish. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms (Pl.32)
6. God the Builder. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms (Pl.33)
7. Boat Woman. Graphite and pastel on stonehenge paper. 80cms x 145cms (Pl.29)
8. In Memoria. Oil on canvas. 180cms x 120cms
9. Passage. Oil on canvas. 180cms x 120 cms
10. Circle of Friends. Ash glazed earthenware pieces arranged on wall.260cms diameter.(Pl.38)
12. Guardian. Ash glazed earthenware. 57cms x 35cms x 26cms
13. Sentinel 3. Ash glazed earthenware. 56cms x 22cms x 18cms
14. Resurrection. Triptych. Oil on canvas. 181cms x 279cms (Pl.37)
15. Lia Fail. Oil on canvas. 180cms x 120cms. Courtesy UWS Macarthur
16. Men Scryfys Series # 2. Oil/Mixed media on paper. 4 images 9cms x 9cms approx.
17. Icon #1. Oil/encaustic on canvas panels. 39cms x 50cms (Pl.41)
18. Icon #2. Oil/encaustic on canvas panels. 39cms x 50cms (Pl.41)
19. Icon #3. Oil/encaustic on canvas panels. 39cms x 50cms (Pl.41)
20. Icon #4. Oil/encaustic on canvas panels 39cms x 50cms (Pl.41)
21. Newgrange Story Stone. Oil on canvas. 120cms x 120cms (Pl.34)
22. Interior. Oil on canvas. 120cms x 120cms
23. Trinity. Oil on canvas. 120cms x 120cms (Pl.35)
24. Men Scryfys Series #3. Oil/graphite/mixed media on paper. 10 images, each 7cms x 9cms approx. (Pl.39)
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**CATALOGUES**

*Origins, Originality and Beyond. 6th Biennale of Sydney 1986*


*Art is Easy. 8th Biennale of Sydney. Sydney. 1990*


McDonald, P and Pearce, B. *The Artist and the Patron.* AGNSW Sydney. 1988

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ENDNOTES

Page 3. The term Picturesque is used in the specific sense of the style of landscape architecture and painting developed in Europe in the eighteenth century and represented by the work of Humphrey Repton and Lancelot "Capability" Brown. When used as a noun, the term refers to the style itself and its attendant philosophy, and when used as an adjective it implies "in the style of". Page 16. The idea of wilderness is discussed here only in the European context. For Aboriginal people, there is no wilderness, as all landscapes are cultural (See Sutton: 1988, Healy: 1997).

Page 64. Sectarian religious adherence is undoubtedly an important factor in the history of colonization in Australia, particularly for the Irish emigrants (O'Farrell:1986). However, religious denomination is less significant in my discussion than the primary relationship between land and the various rituals which developed in concert with religious belief and practice. The overlaying of Christianity over ancient Celtic ritual practices, and the modification of Catholic ritual in various Protestant denominations does not significantly alter the inherited relationships between ritual and land. Margaret Boyle was listed in the convict lists as Catholic although she later married a Protestant, William Thurgate. Marriages in the colony were often informal and more often than not, of convenience (Robinson:1988:99). In Margaret Boyle's case, the need to provide for her two infant children might well have taken precedence over sectarian religious concerns. My father, also called William Thurgate, who was a descendant of the Catholic Margaret Boyle, had been raised a Presbyterian. I became an Anglican accidentally. My mother did not belong to any church and literally "shopped around" until she found one she thought we would like. The significance of religion here is not grounded in denomination but in the land-based rituals that have survived through Christianity, from much earlier agrarian-based religious practices.
READING THE LAND

THE MARK IN POST COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

MARILYN WALTERS  BA Hons (University of Sydney) MA (University of Sydney) Graduate Diploma (Sydney College of the Arts) MA Australian Studies (University of Sydney)

APPENDIX 1

Faculty of Creative Arts
1999
DOCUMENTATION OF THE CALLAN PARK SITE

September/October 1996
October 1998

This documentation was largely carried out over two periods of two to three weeks in September and October, 1996 and again in October, 1998 during which I photographed, measured and wrote a brief description of each of the carvings. I have been studying the carvings intermittently since I came across them whilst walking in the area in the summer of 1988-89 and two series of works, Fragments of a History of Iron Cove 1 and 11, which I produced in 1989 and 1991 respectively, were based on my observation of these carved images.

The carvings are spread over an area of approximately two hundred meters of foreshore, clustered around a prominent sandstone outcrop which is dominated by a large mushroom shaped rock. This outcrop is clearly visible from the northern shores of the cove so for the purposes of this record I have referred to Mushroom Rock as the dominant location, taking measurements from that point to other nearby groups of carvings. Mushroom Rock corresponds to Traverse Station number 255 on the Heritage Survey 1996 map showing Locations of Rock Engravings at Callan Park, and approximates the areas referred to elsewhere as The Point (Clegg et al:1996:9) Quite close to this outcrop is the site of the summer house erected by John Brenan (see Leong:1985:10)

Fig.Aa Mushroom Rock on the southern shore of Iron Cove, photographed from the east.
Fig. A.a. Mushroom Rock photographed from the East.

Fig. A.b. Looking north across Iron Cove from the carvings at Group 5.
Fig. Ab. Looking north across Iron Cove from the set of carvings at Group 5.

GROUP 1  MUSHROOM ROCK.

i) Fig.D1. Large fish with inscription. Line carving with upper case Roman letters inscribed inside the body of the fish. Letters appear to be BALENEDLAMR although they are quite worn and difficult to read. The fish has six fins and a curved line denoting the head. The style resembles Aboriginal petroglyphs of fish found in the Port Jackson area (see W D Campbell, *Aboriginal Carvings of Port Jackson & Broken Bay*. Sydney Govt. Printer. 1899 also Stanbury, P and Clegg, J. *Field Guide to Aboriginal Rock Carvings*. Oxford. 1996)

Length 3850 mm.

ii) Fig.D.2. Star and Crescent or Compass Rose (J. Clegg: 1994) Four pointed star in outline with a single square behind and crescent under, situated at the nose of the fish. Numbers inside the crescent appear as 1918. Star points north east.

Maximum dimensions 1350 x 1340 mm.

iii) Fig.D.3. Star and Crescent. Outline carving of a four pointed star with single square behind. The star points north. Inscription inside the crescent is very faint, possibly 1889. Situated at the tail of the fish at the western edge of the rock.

Maximum dimensions 1190 x 1230 mm.
Fig. D.1. Group 1. Large fish with inscription.

Fig. D.2. Group 1. Star and Crescent.
Fig. D. 3. Group 1. Star and Crescent.

Fig. D. 4. Group 1. Sailing Ship.
iv) Fig.D.4. Sailing Ship. An outlined carving, the ship is situated at the north end of the rock closest to the water is a three mastered sailing ship with six pairs of sails and three unfurled sails forward.

Maximum dimensions 2160 x 1500mm

v) Fig.D.5. Globe. Situated on the south east side of Mushroom Rock, this symbol has been interpreted as a globe (Clegg: 1974), however the lines of longitude do not converge at the top of the circle as one would expect. Another possible interpretation is that the cross-hatched circle could represent a fishing net.

Max. dimensions 2040 x 2040 mm.

vi) Fig.D.6. Date 1889 and the word HELP in upper case Roman lettering. These marks occur at the top (land side) of the globe and may or may not be related to the larger carving.

HELP is the only obvious English word which occurs throughout the carvings although there are a number of groups of letters.

Max dimension approx 500mm.

GROUP 2

LOCATION

Approx. 10 meters S.W. of Mushroom Rock extending to the east.
Fig. D. 5. Group 1. Globe

Fig. D. 6. Group 1. Date 1889 and the word "HELP".
i) Fig.D.7. Letters and Crescent. Continuous Roman upper case lettering extending in a straight line. The letters are quite clear although the eastern end is a little overgrown. Letters read:
MSSJOSEPHEEJANMARIJAMBONWLERE 19109.
Length 3510 mm. Max letter height approx 200mm.
Directly below this line of lettering is a crescent with the letters BALINE 1908 inscribed inside.
Max. dimension approx. 1200mm.

ii) Fig.D.8. Fish, Star and Crescent with double square behind. Figure with pecked cap is attached to the right point of the crescent with profile facing left towards the star and square. The arms are attached to the crescent and this figure, unlike the others appears to have an ear. The crescent contains the inscription WELERE 1908 WELERE. Directly below the crescent is a fish with four fins and a long nose with mouth line and one eye. The inscription WILERE appears below the fish.
Max. dimension visible 1200mm.

iii) Fig.D.9. Lettering and Figure. Four lines of upper case Roman letters and numbers, faint in places. To the right of the last row of letters is a frontal figure, head arms and torso. The figure appears clothed but facial features are obscured. The garment is waisted and a series of straight lines below the waist suggest pleats but they could equally be decoration. It has been
Fig. D. 7. Group 2. Letters and Crescent.

Fig. D. 8. Group 2. Fish, Star and Crescent.

Fig. D. 9. Group 2. Lettering and Figure.
suggested (Clegg:1994) that the figures which occur throughout the carvings are intended to represent western women. This particular figure however resembles a wandjina figure. The figure is cut off at the thigh and there are further markings below which could be the remnants of more lettering although in places these marks are aligned with the stripes/pleats of the garment. John Clegg (1994) identifies a figure, possibly this one, with the letters DUEMONDROIA beneath. He offers the interpretation of a misspelt royal motto DIEU ET MON DROIT hence linking the figure to a stained glass window installed in the recreation hall of the hospital in 1882.

The visible letters read:

1909 WHERE
JAMHAMBON (?) NILE
(?) 1889 26
(??) ANHANSE

Max dimension of the letters 2620 mm

iv) Fig.D.10. Large Crescent with inscription inside and lettering above. The crescent has two v shaped intersecting lines inside, resembling the masons protractors. The upper case Roman letters appear above the crescent in two lines as follows:

MSS JOESPOEE
ERARHELorEIMA (??)RA(??)

Max. dimensions 1880 x 480 mm.

v) Fig.D.10.A Star with double square and crescent with masthead figure attached. Inscription 1919 WELERE appears inside the crescent. A very elaborate star, in the centre of which is a circle and another square divided into
Fig. D.10. Large Crescent with inscription, possibly Mason's mark.

Fig. D. 10.a. Star with elaborate double square and crescent with mast-head figure attached. Inscription 1919 WELERE appears inside the crescent.
four quarters. Each quarter contains an "X". The figure faces left like a masthead, has a pecked "cap" and appear to have an ear. This star/square combination is similar to Fig. D8 but differs in the placement of the figure, in this case the figure is attached to the left point of the crescent and faces outwards, masthead fashion.

Approx. dimensions 1700mm x 1200mm.

GROUP 3

LOCATION

Flat exposed rock near the fence of cottage B492, in the "pathway" approx. 85 meters S.E. of Mushroom Rock. These carvings are the best preserved group on the site.

i) Fig.D.11. Sailing Ship. Three masted sailing ship with 6 pairs of sails and three forward sails, executed in outline. The hull bares the name, MR JAMHAMBON in upper case Roman lettering and below the ship is a further inscription in a mixture of upper and lower case letters 14f407PON.

Max. dimensions 2560 x 1450 mm.

ii) Fig.D.12. Anchor and either a serpent or the beginnings of a profile figure.

The anchor has been executed in a pecked technique not a line drawing as is common on the site.

Max. dimensions 800x460 mm.
Fig. D.11. Group 3. Sailing Ship, "MR. JAMHAMBON"

Fig. D.12. Group 3. Anchor and profile.
The serpent or profile is to the left of the anchor some 300mm. The line does resemble that of other profile figures on the site.

Max. dimension approx 220mm

iii) Fig.D.13 Star and Crescent. Star and Crescent with single square behind the star and pecked circles inside the star and square. The "name" JOSEPHEfE JAMHAMBON in upper case Roman lettering appears in the crescent and the date 1889 appears at the top of the star.
The star points due north. The circle decoration appears random.

Max. dimensions 1350x1300mm.

iv) Fig.D.14 Oval shaped outline with curved line across. This could have been the beginnings of a globe or a variation of the crescent which has been abandoned.

Max dimensions 1100x780mm.

GROUP 4

LOCATION

Approx 6 meters East of Group 4. Exposed rock outcrop approx. 60 meters S.E of Mushroom Rock.

i) Fig.D. 15. Star and Crescent with double square behind. The carving is very faint. An inscription inside the crescent is barely readable, appears to read in part 1917. Figure attached to the right point of the crescent faces inwards towards the star.
Fig. D.13. Group 3. Star and Crescent, JOSEPHE JAMHAMBON.

Fig. D.14. Group 3. Oval/crescent.
Max Dimensions 2000 x 1400 mm.

ii) Fig.D16 Star and crescent with profile and flag. A very complex carving featuring the outline of a star and crescent with the date(?) 1883 repeated three times inside the crescent. From the top left corner of the single square behind the star the outline of a flag pole protrudes which bares a flag with 21 visible radiating lines, resembling the Japanese flag. On the left tip of the crescent a profile figure emerges also in outline but with hair or a cap which is rendered in the pecked technique. The figure and its positioning give the impression of a mast-head.

Max. dimensions 2310x1500 mm.

iii) Fig.D.17. Figure and Crescent. Frontal figure in outline with arms held away from the body; appears clothed with three pecked circles suggesting buttons above the waist. The head has eyes and nose but no mouth and the hair is suggested by two leaf shapes either side of a central parting with the addition of a curved line inside each shape. The figure appears to loom from behind the crescent.

Max. dimensions 1070x1040 mm.

iv) Fig.D.18 Crescent and Star with profile figure. This carving is also quite complex featuring the outline of a star with a double square behind and crescent below with the date(?) 1855 inside. On the right tip of the crescent is a figure with face in left profile and body frontal and arms encircling the top half of the
Fig. D.15. Group 4. Star and Crescent.

Fig. D.16. Group 4. Star and Crescent with figure and flag.
Fig. D.17. Group 4. Figure and Crescent.

Fig. D.18. Group 4. Crescent, Star and Figure.
torso. The figure has the same pecked hat or hair as in Fig.16. In this carving the figure faces into the star rather than away. The crescent is proportionally larger than the star in this carving compared to Fig.D.16.

Max dimensions 2150x1700 mm.

v) Fig.D.19 Horse. Situated on the water side of the crescent and flag carving is a small animal, possibly a horse. Outlined in profile with two ears, one eye, four legs and tail. Very faint. Max. dimensions approx 900mm. Very difficult to measure because it is so faint.

GROUP 5
LOCATION
Adjacent to Group 4 and to the east approx. 5meters

i) Fig.D.20. Globe. Outline grid carving of a globe. One pole only is described and the longitude lines do not converge at the poles. The globe is mounted on a base with the date 1889 inscribed inside the base. The date 1889 also appears near the base of a similar globe in Group 1.

Max. dimensions 1500x1450 mm.

ii) Fig.D.21. Lettering. Continuous Upper case Roman letters and numbers as follows:

MSS JAMRIPIRIAMBAU1909.

Situated between the Globe (Fig 20) and the sailing ship (Fig. 22). The letters MSS appear larger and less ordered than the rest, possibly a different hand.
Fig. D.19. Group 4. Quadruped, possibly a horse or alpaca.

Fig. D.20. Group 5. Globe
Max dimensions 3100mm. Max letter height 210mm.

iii) Fig.D.22. Sailing Ship. Four masted sailing ship rendered in outline.
Six pairs of sails and three forward sails. Inscription underneath is not readable.
Max. dimensions 2900x1820mm.

iv) Fig.D. 23. Star and Crescent. Star and crescent with single square and
inscription in the crescent, possibly 1905 or 19905. Very faint.
Max. dimensions 1480x1430 mm

v) Fig.D.24. Profile Face. Left profile outlined face with pecked hat or hair
and numbers under 18826. The profile is cut off at the neck with a straight line.
Approx. size 350mm x 300mm

GROUP 6
LOCATION
Adjacent Group 5 to the East South East. Approx. 90 meters from Mushroom
Rock

i) Fig.D.25. Star and crescent with double square. Outlined carving, very
faint. Inscription in the crescent is very faint but appears to be a date, possibly
1917.
Max. dimensions 1900x1840mm.
Fig. D.21. Group 5. Lettering

Fig. D.22. Group 5. Sailing Ship

Fig. D.23. Group 5. Star and Crescent.
Fig. D.24. Group 5. Profile Face.

Fig. D.25. Group 6. Star and Crescent.
ii) Fig.D.26. Lettering. Three lines of continuous lettering in upper case Roman. Appears as follows:

??SIOO8SP?N??
MSJAMBII(orM)AMBAUWOUIP(orB)
SWLESTNHINGBFLETILWOIKE19109

Max dimension 4100mm. Max letter size 250mm

Above the letter is a large sailing ship but it is barely visible and impossible to photograph and measure without specialized equipment.

iii) Fig.D.27. Star and crescent with double square. Outline carving situated above the ship to the south west. Inscription in the crescent possibly 19190. Top of the star is overgrown with grass.

Max. dimensions 1500x1700 mm.

iv) Fig.D.28. Star and crescent with single square. Outline carving situated south east of the ship. Inscription in the crescent possibly a date, 1889. There appears to be another crescent and star under this carving.

Max dimension 1400x1410 mm.

v) Fig.D.29. Star and crescent with double square. Only readable number in the crescent appears to be 9. Carving is in outline.

Max. dimensions 1600x1540 mm.

vi) Fig.D.30. Star and crescent. Situated on a smaller area of rock immediately below the group. Outline carving with single square behind.
Fig. D.26. Group 6. Lettering

Fig. D.27. Group 6. Star and Crescent.
Fig. D.28. Group 6. Star and Crescent with single square.

Fig. D.29. Group 6. Star and Crescent with double square.
Max. dimensions 1300x1300mm.

(There is another crescent and star between Group 6 and the next major group but it was too faint to photograph. There are 5 crescent and star carvings in this group.)

GROUP 7
LOCATION
Adjacent to Group 6 to the east, under the trees.

i)  Fig. D.31. Boat. Outline carving of a boat which is not a sailing ship but appears to be a steamer. Two funnels and flags fore and aft. The forward flag has a triangle below and the rear flag could possibly represent a tricolour.

Max. dimensions 1500x1240 mm.

ii) Fig. D.32. Star and crescent. Situated below the steam ship is a star and crescent with single square. Inscription inside the crescent appears to read 19190W.

Max. Dimensions 1520x1220 mm.

GROUP 8
LOCATION
On the east side of the rock outcrop containing Groups 5, 6, 7, in the trees, overlooking the football field is a further three star and crescent carvings. All three appear to be alone on separate rocks about 7-10 meters apart.
Fig. D.30. Group 6. Star and Crescent.

Fig. D.31. Group 7. Steamship.

Fig. D.32. Group 7. Star and Crescent.
i) Fig.D.33. Star and crescent with single square. Outlined carving with inscription in crescent, 1918.

Max dimension approx 1050x1000mm

ii) Fig.D.34. Star and crescent. Outline carving of star and crescent with single square. The star appears to be floating above the crescent, not attached as in the other similar carvings. Inscription in the crescent appears to be 1889.

iii) Fig.D.35. Star and crescent. This star and crescent is much larger than the other two in this group. It is situated on a rock which was inaccessible so measurements could not be recorded.

GROUP 9
LOCATION
Approx 10 meters south west of Mushroom Rock.

i) Fig.D.36. Lettering. Four lines of letters and numbers with symbols as follows.

1901
WOUHLIROPEFRANHIW(orN)SE
MSSMARHENTNorMBAWOUI
V 19109

Max. dimensions 4360x1330 mm. Letters approx 200mm high.

ii) Fig.D.37. Fish. Situated 5 meters to the west of the lettering (Fig36) on
Fig. D.33. Group 8. Star and crescent with single square.

Fig. D.34. Group 8. Star and crescent with date 1889.
Fig. D.35. Group 8. Star and crescent.

Fig. D.36. Group 9. Lettering

Fig. D.37. Group 8. Fish.
the upper fork of the walking track. Outline drawing but in X-ray style with backbone and ribs. The number of fins is difficult to see, possibly 6. The fish has a long pointed face. The carving is smaller and more elaborate than the large fish on Mushroom Rock. It is possibly Aboriginal in origin.

Max dimensions 1690x690 mm.

Above the fish is another crescent but it was two faint and overgrown with grass to photograph.

iii) Fig.D.38. Man in the hat. Situated a little further west, on the lower fork of the walking track. Left profile, outline drawing of a man wearing a round crown wide brimmed hat. The profile is better defined than the other profile carvings in that the man has a well defined mouth nose and chin. The top of the head is shown (x-ray style) under the hat.

Max. dimensions 750x540mm

UNGROUPED CARVINGS

1. LOCATION

50 meters east of Mushroom Rock adjacent the roundabout and parking area, about 8-9 meters on the waterside, shaded by trees.

i) Fig.D.39. Lettering. Three rows of upper case Roman letters as follows:

NJANRONWELBREF
AHAWELEBEKAHANMAHA
??ORANHANSPHAMor N 1912

Light conditions were not favourable for photography.

Max. dimensions 2900mm. Max height of letters 165mm.
Fig. D.38. Group 9. Man wearing a hat.

Fig. D. 39. Photograph unavailable.

Fig. D. 40. Star and crescent.
2. LOCATION

Parking area near the roundabout, approx 55 meters west of Mushroom Rock.

i) Fig. D.40. Star and crescent. Crescent is pecked not outlined as in the other star and crescent carvings. Single square behind, and partly obscured by gravel.

Max dimension visible 1050mm.

ii) Fig. D.41 Sailing Boat. Line carving with the lettering 936 PON visible. An attempt has been made to cover this carving with concrete. A section of the rock approx. 85cms x 30cms to a depth of 10cms has also been chiselled out and removed.

Accurate measurement was not possible because of grass cover and damage.

iii) Fig. D.42 Crescent. Pecked style. Considerably smaller than other versions of the crescent.

Approx. 300mm

3. LOCATION

Front garden of cottage no. B492 on the south eastern edge of the site.

i) Fig. D.43 Lettering. Three rows of upper case Roman letters and numbers as follows:

MSSSANPSON 188?
JMSSAMPSO?
1918 19??


Fig. D.41. Sailing ship.

Fig. D.42. Crescent.

Fig. D.43. Lettering
Max dimension 1780mm long. Max Letter height 140mm.

4. LOCATION
Below group 4 on a ledge over the water.
i) Fig.D.44 Figure. Very faint figure - appears to be a woman. Left profile head and frontal body with left profile feet in heeled boots. Figure is clothed in skirt and top with a wide waist band. Arms are held away from the body with hands behind the skirt, not visible. The profile is similar to those on the "mast-head" figures with similar pecked hat or hair.
This carving was very faint and impossible to photograph, however, it was clearly the figure refered to by John Clegg in his 1994 paper, identifiable by the drawing Clegg includes (Clegg:1996:15).

Max dimensions approx 2040x800 mm.

5. LOCATION
Far western corner of the point.
i) Fig. D45a Initials VS and DH with serifs
Max. dimension approx. 250mm.

ii) Fig. 45c Profile head. This profile resembles the others but has an open line "cap' rather than a pecked one and the eye is much clearer and contains a pupil.

Approx. dimensions 350mm x 250mm
Fig. D. 45c. Profile head.

Fig. D. 44. Figure. Drawing from John Clegg's 1994 Documentation.

Fig. D. 45a. Initials with serifs
References:


