

## Foreword and Acknowledgements

This monograph has developed out of the research of the Kinchega Archaeological Research Project (KARP).<sup>1</sup> In 1995, I was invited to take part in an archaeological project on the Kinchega National Park, by Peter Grave (University of New England, Armidale) and Paul Rainbird (formerly of Sturt University and the University of Wales, Lampeter). The initial aspiration for this project was that it would concern the prehistory and pastoral history of the Kinchega National Park. However, the departure of Peter Grave at the project's initiation, and then Paul Rainbird in 1997, meant that the resulting Kinchega Archaeological Research Project focused on my own specialisms in the realm of household archaeology. I am grateful to both these colleagues for inviting me to take part in this project, and particularly to Paul for his support and encouragement to continue with it.

The fieldwork for KARP was undertaken as field schools for archaeology and cultural heritage students from the Charles Sturt University (1996), the University of Sydney (1996–2002), and the Australian National University (2002), directed first by Paul Rainbird, Sam Wickman and me (1996) and subsequently by me as sole director. The field seasons were funded by the respective universities, as well as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS – 1996), and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (1998). We are grateful to these organisations for their support and to all the participants, of which there too many to be named individually, for their hard work, enthusiasm and companionship in the field. Of particular note here, though, are Aedeon Cremin, Penny Crook, and Phillippa Weaver. We are also grateful to the Kinchega National Park for providing accommodation for the project team during this fieldwork and to park staff for their support, especially Rick Taylor and Badger Bates. In 2000, I carried out initial archival research into the Kinchega Pastoral Estate bookkeeping records, held at Kars Station, with support from the Charles Rasp Library, Broken Hill. I am grateful to John (Tom) Hughes, Kars Station, for providing access to these records, and also to Brian Tonkin and Marvis Sofield, library manager, for their assistance with this research.

This monograph focuses on fine ceramics and their roles in social behaviour at the Old Kinchega Homestead, and particularly the remains of tablewares and teawares that were collected in and around the homestead by KARP between 1998 and 2002. Most of the post-excavation recording, photographing and analyses of these ceramic remains was undertaken in the School of Archaeology

and Anthropology, Australian National University. For their initial cataloguing and recording, between 2002 and 2009, I am grateful to Ian Pritchard and Aedeon Cremin. A report on the preliminary analyses of these ceramics was published in 2006 (Allison and Cremin 2006). In 2009 and 2010, Virginia Esposito and I carried out further cataloguing, photographing and analyses, with the assistance of students from the Australian National University. Also, in 2010, I undertook further research into the Kinchega Estate bookkeeping records, targeting entries related to consumer goods and particularly tablewares and teawares, with assistance from Aedeon Cremin, and Sophie and Katrina Bickford. During this research trip, all the artefacts from KARP were returned to the Kinchega National Park. I am grateful to these students, colleagues and friends for their support and assistance, and to the British Academy for funding for the research in 2009–10. I would also like to thank Fred and Pip Hughes for their support during this archival research at Kars Station, and particularly for providing accommodation for the team.

For further library and archival research for the historical context of the Old Kinchega Homestead, I am grateful to the National Library of Australia, Canberra, for a Harold White Fellowship (September to December 2014). KARP is essentially an archaeological project but this fellowship at the National Library of Australia, while I was resident in the United Kingdom, provided access to the Library's extensive collections of both published works on histories of Australian pastoralism and of western NSW, their collection of Australian mail order catalogues, their digitised collections of Australian newspapers, and to their own archival collections and audio recordings of outback pastoral life and Darling River transport, as well as to those in the Menzies Library, Australian National University. During this fellowship, I was again grateful to Aedeon Cremin, who gave generously of her time to assist with this library research.

For their important contributions of oral information, drawings and photographs that have been used in this study, I would like to thank former occupants and their descendants, and members of the Hughes family, especially Tom Hughes, Chris Hughes, Fred and Pippa Hughes, Peter Beven, Robin Taylor, Jim McLennan and Noeline (Sissy) Clarke. I would like to thank David Dumaresq, who has provided insights into his own family's pastoral history. This study would not be complete without their valuable contributions. Regrettably, some former occupants of OKH and members of the Hughes family who provided valuable information at the beginning of this project are no longer with us to witness the final outcome of this research and their own input into it.

<sup>1</sup> A fuller report of KARP is currently being prepared for publication by University of Sydney Press, in association with the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology.

Other contributors to this project's fieldwork to whom I am indebted include: Jaimie Lovell, who was responsible for the original design of the databases used to record the features contexts and artefacts; Lara Band, who collated the information on the Kinchega stores journals; and Sarah Colley, who, with funding from the College of Arts and Social Sciences (University of Leicester) has helped to digitally collate all the data resources resulting from KARP, making working with these data sets and images of the ceramics a much simpler task. I am also grateful to many of the Roman ceramic specialists who took part in the Big Data on the Roman Table Network (see Allison *et al.* 2018), and to my PhD student, Alessandra Pegurri, for the insights they have given me for more consumption-oriented approaches to ceramic classification and analyses.

I would like to thank Chris Hughes again for reading and commenting on chapter nine. For producing the drawings that have been used in this monograph, I am grateful to Amanda Mottram, Deborah Miles Williams and Mike Hawkes, and also to Peter Beven for his important sketch of the homestead, which he executed from memory. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their very insightful comments and suggestions. And, I am grateful

to the University of Leicester for support and funding to bring this monograph to completion, especially to Graham Shipley, editor of the Leicester Archaeology Monographs, for his invaluable assistance with the index.

Last but not least, I am indebted to my co-author, Virginia Esposito, for her expert knowledge of Australian nineteenth-century ceramics, for giving freely of her time to this project, for her attention to detail, and for her contributions to our combined analyses in the chapters that comprise the bulk of the analyses in this monograph – chapters four to eight. Any errors or lacunae are our own and hopefully can be addressed, and the approaches used in this study improved on, with more research in this area.

The Kinchega National Park celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2017. It is to be regretted that this monograph was not completed for this celebration. However, the archaeology and history of Kinchega, in all its dimensions, continues to be a fascinating topic.

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## Introduction: Micro-archaeological Approaches and the Old Kincheha Homestead

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Objects both inform on household practices and are active agents in the performativity of social interactions in domestic contexts, purveying socio-cultural messages among participants in such interactions. Detailed analyses of mundane domestic artefacts and their contextual and social assemblages can therefore provide nuanced, and also more holistic, understandings of social worlds. This includes those of the largely British migrants and their descendants who made their home in colonial outback Australia, as part of Australia's important pastoral industry. An artefact-based approach to social practices at one pastoral homestead<sup>2</sup> in a relatively remote late nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century British colonial and post-colonial context in outback Australia can be used to investigate changing social values, changing meanings of domestic artefacts, and changing Britishness and associated concepts of gentility and respectability and codes of hospitality in this setting.

This study focuses on the artefactual evidence for eating and drinking practices at the Old Kincheha Homestead, an outback pastoral homestead in western New South Wales, Australia, occupied from at least 1878 until 1955. It comprises micro-archaeological analyses of ceramic tableware and teaware remains recovered from the homestead site by the Kincheha Archaeological Research Project and uses these analyses to drive investigations of related documentary records of comparable items in Australian mail order catalogues, and of purchasing entries in the Kincheha Pastoral Estate's bookkeeping records of potentially some of the same objects. It also analyses relevant reports in local newspapers and information provided by former homestead inhabitants and their descendants. These combined analyses provide insights into the homestead's occupants' social networks, socio-cultural mores and social aspirations. In turn, these insights can lead to greater understandings of the social lives and lived experiences of people, particularly 'white' women, involved in Australia's outback pastoral industry, aspects of this industry that have received little attention in the traditional histories and archaeological research on this male-dominated sphere. Here this study takes both a detailed socially oriented approach to artefactual evidence in archaeology, and a more artefact-based approach to social history, as well as a more integrated approach in both (see Russell 2016: 50).

### **The Old Kincheha Homestead and the west Darling region**

Old Kincheha Homestead (OKH) was one of the main residences on the Kincheha Pastoral Estate, in western NSW. This region, west of the Darling River and bounded by that river and by the Queensland and South Australian borders, is often referred to as 'The Corner Country' (Figure 1). Its first official exploration by Europeans was in 1835 (Mitchell 1839), resulting in the area being 'squatted' for pastoral pursuits from c.1846. Initially 'squating' in this region was in 'defiance of the government' (see Waterhouse 2005: 14, 21–22). However, the region became increasingly more settled, and colonised, by Europeans during the second half of the nineteenth century, first for further extensive pastoral runs (see Hardy 1969: 61–117) and then, after 1880, for mining exploits, mainly in the Barrier Ranges and the White Cliffs areas (see Hardy 1969: 151–99).

The area of Darling River and Menindee Lakes in which OKH is located was an important resource for the Aboriginal populations from some 27,000 years ago (Balme and Hope 1990; Balme 1995; Martin *et al.* n.d.: 46; see also Rainbird *et al.* n.d.: 5–12). This area was still important for relatively large Aboriginal communities when first explored by Europeans and then occupied by pastoralists. However, documentary and oral evidence, and also likely archaeological evidence, demonstrating its continuing occupation by Aboriginal communities as pastoralists settled here is limited (see Hardy 1969: 37–38; Martin *et al.* n.d.: 8; Rainbird *et al.* n.d.: 46–54; Pardoe 2003; see also Freeman 2002: esp. 14–19, 48–63).

The first documented evidence for pastoral activity in the Menindee Lakes area is that of a sheep camp called 'Kincheha Station', recorded in 1851 (see Survey of Right Bank of Darling River, 1851). This station was owned by the Rankin family (Hardy 1969: 65), who had taken up three other pastoral leases in the area in 1849 (Haeusler 1989: 14–15). A year or so later, a hotel was reportedly erected to form the embryonic beginnings of what later became the first township on the Darling River, Menindee, about 15 km to the north of the site of OKH (see Hardy 1969: 82–83; Maiden 1989: 4). In 1860, the famous Australian explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and John William Wills camped at Peter MacGregor's Kincheha river steamer landing prior to their fatal attempt to cross central Australia (Hardy 1969: 122–28; Maiden 1989: 34; Bonyhardy 1991: 113–15, 120–23, *passim* Kearns 1970: 3).

<sup>2</sup> A 'homestead' in Australia is the residential complex of a pastoral station.

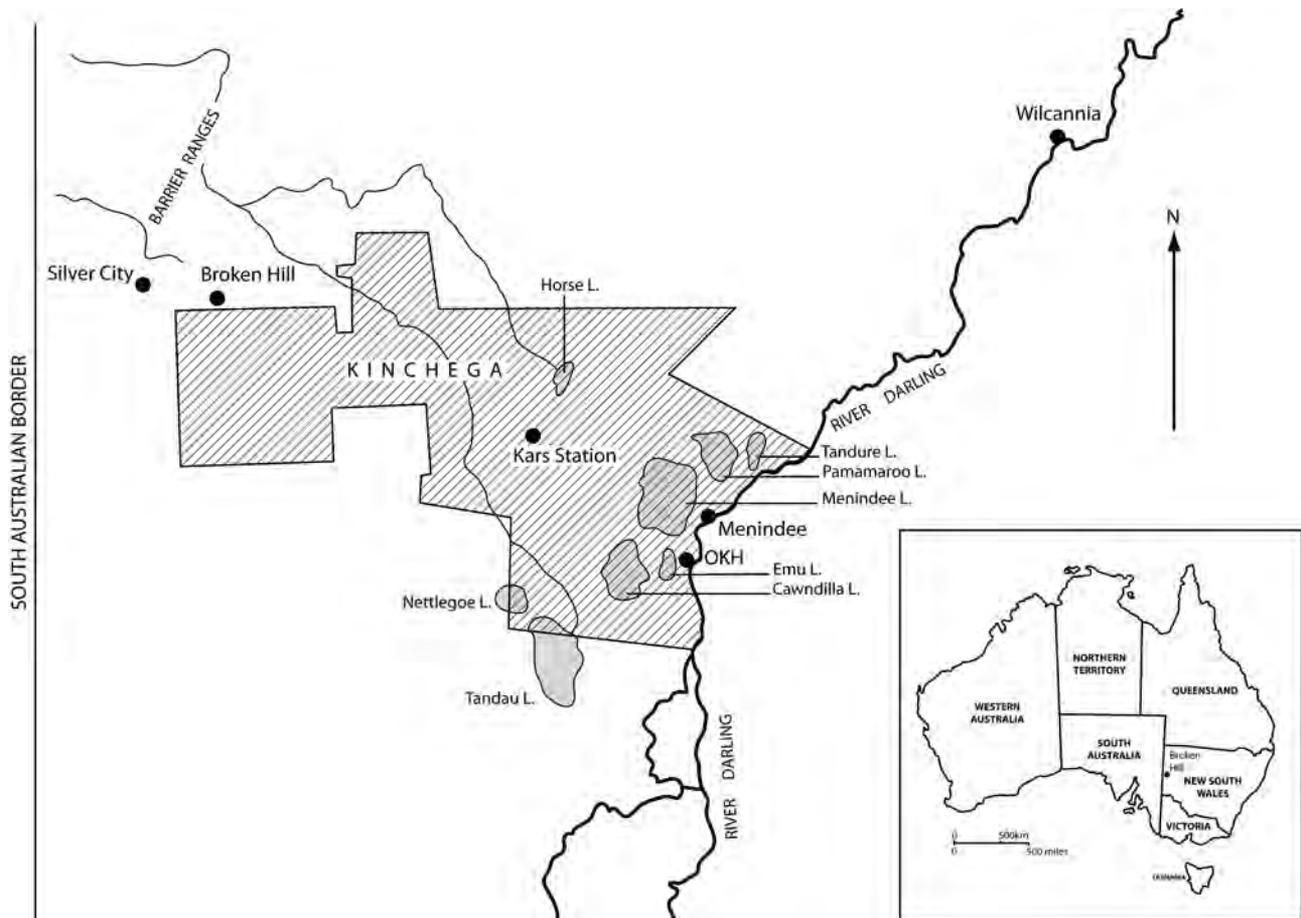


Figure 1. Map of western NSW showing location of the Old Kinchega Homestead. (Drawing by Michael Hawkes for KARP.)

In 1870, after a number of short leaseholdings, the Kinchega pastoral lease was taken up by Herbert Bristow Hughes, who developed the Kinchega Pastoral Estate, which at one time reportedly stretched from the Darling River to beyond the Barrier Ranges, and, by 1882, ran up to 160,000 sheep (Kearns 1970: 4, 9). Parts of the Kinchega Pastoral Estate still remain in H. B. Hughes' name and in the Hughes family. However, when the lease was due to expire in 1967, the eastern end of the estate, including OKH and Darling River frontage, was converted into the Kinchega National Park (*Canberra Times*, 7 Dec. 1966: 12).

OKH, on Kinchega Station, was one of a number of homesteads on the Kinchega Pastoral Estate and, being on the banks of the Darling River, was less remote than many other homesteads and pastoral stations in this west Darling region. There was undoubtedly an earlier Kinchega homestead than OKH, built closer to the bend in the Darling River, which was reported by H. B. Hughes' grandson, E. Gwynne Hughes (pers. comm., fax, 14 Oct. 1998; see also Figure 2) and of which fragments of brick and household artefacts have been recorded (Homestead no. 1 site: Freeman 2002[2]: 23–28). This earlier homestead, built on the grey soils of the Darling River's flood plain, may have been visited by Bourke and Wills and had very probably been subsequently flooded. A newer homestead (OKH) was built to the north, on the edge of the billabong (the large pond formed from an earlier bend

in the Darling River), and on the red soils that had not been subjected to flooding. The core of OKH appears to have been completed by 1878 (Figure 3), and comprised a four-roomed main homestead building with at least two outbuildings. As indicated in the plan drawn in 1996 by a former occupant of the homestead, Peter Beven (Figure 2), the main building was added to and adapted during its lifetime. The homestead area also included several other service buildings and workers' residences, two of which are indicated on Beven's plan – a 'Chinaman's hut' and a 'slab hut' (for plan of homestead complex: Figure 4; for further details: Allison 2014, n.d. 1). In 1955, OKH was replaced by a smaller homestead, the New Kinchega Homestead, built c.3 km to the south near the woolshed, and so closer to the workers on the station (see Allison 2003; 2014). The Old and then the New Kinchega Homesteads were occupied first by the managers and then, after 1915, by overseers of Kinchega Station, as part of the Kinchega Pastoral Estate. The occupants of these homestead complexes were predominantly British, but included people of other European, Chinese and Aboriginal origin. While the estate owner, H. B. Hughes, lived in Adelaide, at least one of his sons lived at OKH as manager (see Appendix 10), and members of the Hughes family were apparently frequent visitors to OKH. The homestead was partially demolished in the 1960s–70s, after the establishment of the Kinchega National Park and prior to the 1977 New South Wales Heritage Act (Heritage Act 1997 2018).

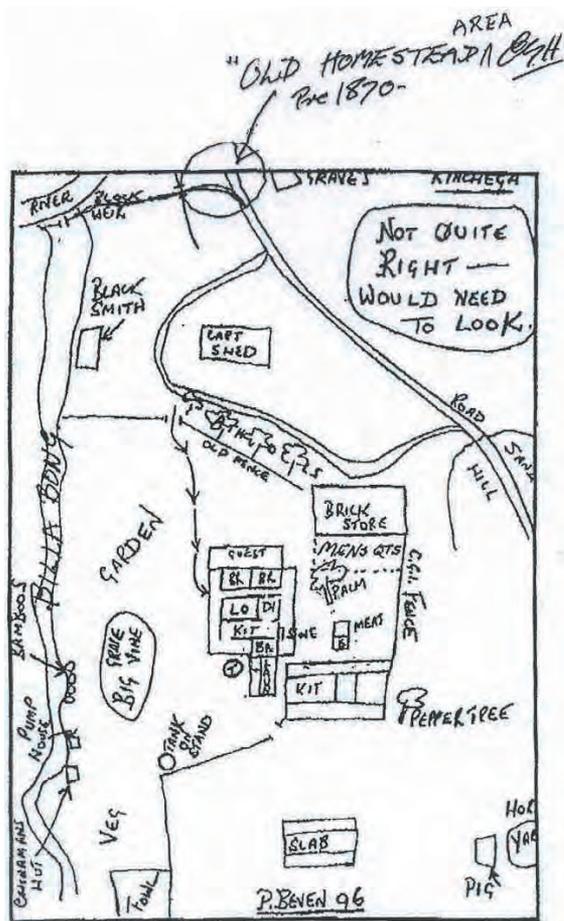


Figure 2. Sketch plan of homestead by Peter Beven, annotated by E. Gwynne Hughes – ‘EGH’ (1998). (Courtesy of Peter Beven.)

Under the Hughes’ long leasehold, and during the period in which OKH was occupied, the Kinchega Pastoral Estate became a significant player in the wool industry that was a major contributor to Australia’s economic growth in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. During this period, the estate experienced fluctuating fortunes. Contributing factors to these fortunes were: depression and rabbit infestations in the 1880s; droughts, overstocking and more rabbits during the first few decades of the twentieth century (Hardy 1969: 189–190, 228–231); the ‘boom and bust’ of the Australian economy into the mid-twentieth century; and changing transport and communication systems from stock routes, bullock wagons, stagecoaches and river steamers to trains, telephones, motorised transport and the radio (see Schmidt n.d.: 121–132; Meredith and Dyster 1999: esp. 58–68, 100–102, 123, 136–38; Waterhouse 2005: esp. 35–38, 90, 179, 219–20). The period in which OKH was occupied was also a period of considerable social change in Australia: from colonial settlement; through phases of reportedly ‘transnational Anglo-Saxonism’ in the late nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century (Lake 2013); Australian Federation in 1901 (Cremin 2001), when Australians were forging their own national identity; then a revived ‘White Britishness’ prior to and during the First World War; and finally to the early 1950s, after the Australian Citizenship Act (1948) came into force.

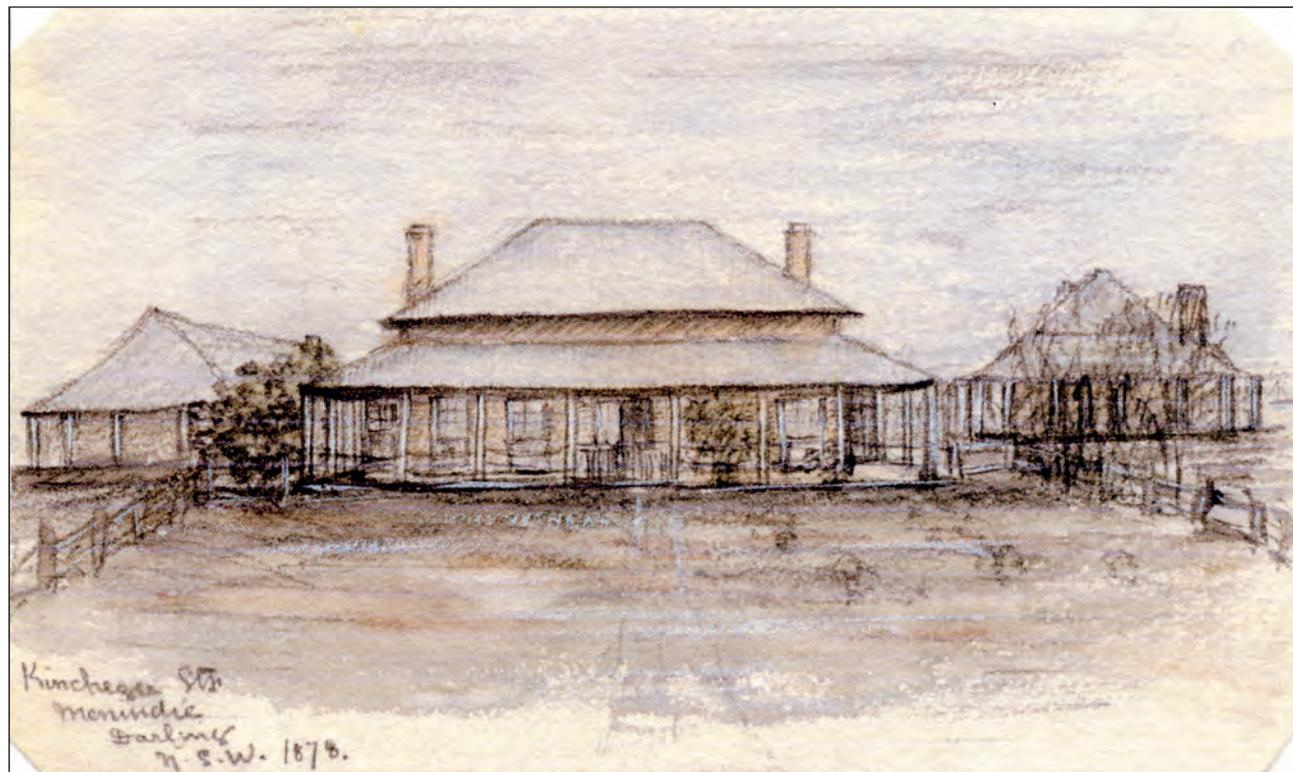


Figure 3. Pencil and wash drawing of the Old Kinchega Homestead, dated 1878. (Photo courtesy of Chris Hughes.)

### **The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project**

The over 2,000 ceramic tableware and teaware fragments discussed in this study were collected from OKH and recorded by the Kinchega Archaeological Research Project (KARP). Between 1996 and 2010, KARP carried out archaeological, archival and oral history investigations of OKH and its occupants (Allison n.d.1.). The first two field seasons (1996 and 1998) involved survey of extant pre-European and European surface features associated with the homestead complex and in the immediate vicinity (Rainbird *et al.* n.d.; Allison 1998; Figure 4). In 1999 and 2000 (Allison n.d. 2, n.d. 3), small-scale excavations were carried out, using metre-wide trenches through the residential buildings of the homestead – the main building (Building A – Allison 2003: fig. 6; 2014: fig. 9), the ‘slab hut’ (Building R), and the ‘Chinaman’s hut’ (Building Y – Allison 2014: fig. 8). The aim of these excavations was to identify the various spaces within these buildings and to recover household artefacts, mainly from under the floors, to investigate the spatial distribution of household activities and consumption practices at the homestead. In 1999, two 1 m x 1 m test trenches were also excavated in the household refuse area (DD), which lies c.200 m to north of the main homestead building (A) and covers an area of some 500 sq. m. No artefacts were found below the surface in these two test trenches in this refuse area. Therefore, a further fieldwork programme, in 2002, focused on surface collection of artefacts that had been discarded at this refuse site, an area which was, and still is, being seriously looted by visitors to the Kinchega National Park (Allison and Cremin n.d.). This refuse area is dotted with artefact deposits, each of which appears to comprise a discrete dumping event with a relatively closely dated assemblage (Figure 5). In the first stage of this surface collection, total artefact assemblages were collected from six 4 m x 4 m sample squares within selected larger deposits in this refuse area. However, for more targeted sampling for information on household activities, samples of different types of glassware and diagnostic ceramic fragments were collected across the entire refuse area, with each dumping event identified as a separate context (see Allison 2003: 175; Allison and Cremin 2006: 49).

KARP’s overall research programme combines analyses of all the archaeological evidence from this fieldwork at OKH with oral and archival research, to investigate the materiality of the lived experiences of the homestead occupants. The artefactual remains at OKH and the original bookkeeping records of the Kinchega Pastoral Estate, in particular, constitute primary source materials for insights into these experiences throughout the homestead’s history, and into the connections of these experiences to the changing purchasing and consumption practices for household goods over its 80-year occupancy. These analyses raised questions concerning the role of these artefacts in understanding the impact of changing communication networks, economic circumstances and social mores on household behaviour in this context. Preliminary analyses of the ceramic artefacts collected

from OKH (Allison and Cremin 2006) demonstrated that these particular objects offer the greatest potential for important insights into social behaviour at this site, and in this particular socio-cultural context. Thus, within KARP’s concern with household activities and consumption practices, the current study focuses specifically on the tableware and teaware remains recorded by KARP and the insights they provide into the changing social practices associated with eating and drinking at this homestead, and the significance of these changing practices in this context, as part of the wider ‘British world’.

### **Household consumption and social practices**

The anthropologist David Graedler critiqued consumption studies for their lack of acknowledgement of social production and maintenance (2011: 489–511). Mullins similarly argued that, while archaeology has long acknowledged consumption patterns as the logical outcome of production, it has paid little attention to the significance of socialising processes surrounding the purchasing and use of goods (2011: 113–44; cf. Baugher and Venables 1987: 36–38). Over recent decades, and across the archaeologies of historical periods, there has been increasing attention to domestic sites as sites of household consumption, the analyses of which have been concerned with investigating actual social practices for greater understanding of consumption and social status (e.g. Beaudry 2004: 254; King 2009; Casella 2009; Owens and Jeffries 2016). As argued by Lauren Prossor, Susan Lawrence, Alasdair Brooks and Jane Lennon, ‘researchers are again explicitly addressing the methodological and theoretical challenges offered by studies of activity and social interaction at the household level’, and are investigating ‘longitudinal change in households’ through ‘micro-scale analyses’ (2012: 810).

In Australian historical archaeology there has been much investigation of household material culture and social practice in urban environments (e.g. Karskens 1999; Crook 2000, 2005; Casey 2005; see also Lawrence and Davies 2018). Archaeological studies that have investigated domestic consumption and household socio-economic status in more rural regions have been mainly concerned with more settled ‘country’ or semi-urban regions close to Australia’s main cities and distribution centres (e.g. Connah 2007; Hayes 2007, 2011, 2014a, 2014b; Prossor *et al.* 2012), or mining communities in ‘the bush’ (e.g. Lawrence 2000). Comparable investigations of colonial and post-colonial outback Australia are notably absent. However, the experiences of colonial settlers and their successors in such more remote contexts would have been quite different from those in more settled areas. For outback Australia, transport and communications systems, both for the acquisition of household goods and opportunities for social networking, provided more of a challenge. The ‘embeddedness in landscapes [which] must have underpinned many [household] practices and relationships’ (Foxhall 2016: 326) is particularly true for this context.

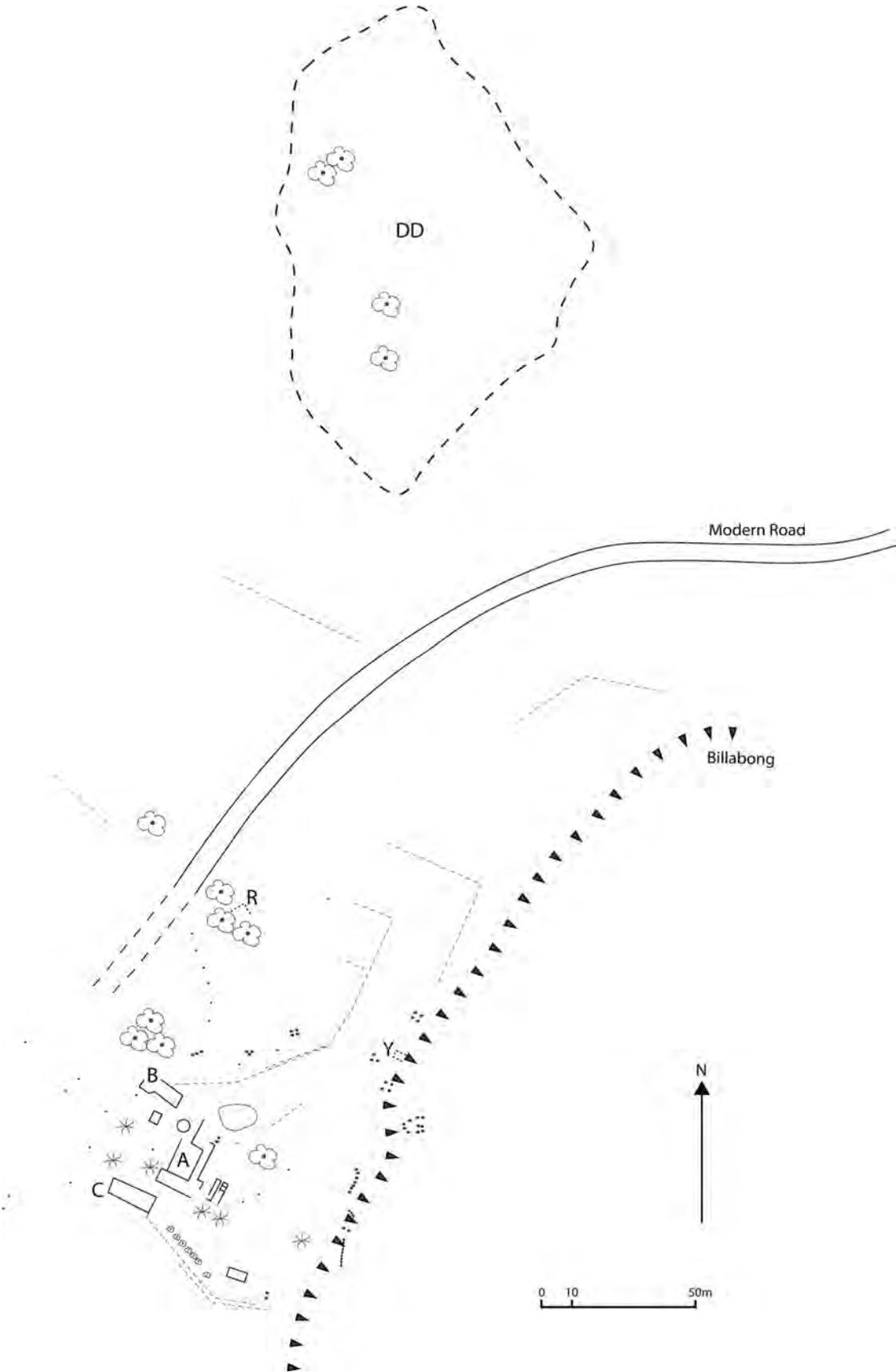


Figure 4. North-east and central part of area surveyed by KARP. A = Building A (main building), B = Building B (kitchen), C = Building C (store and men's quarters), R = Building R ('slab hut'), Y = Building Y ('Chinaman's hut'), DD = Dump DD. (Survey by Michael Barry for KARP; redrawn by Michael Hawkes.)

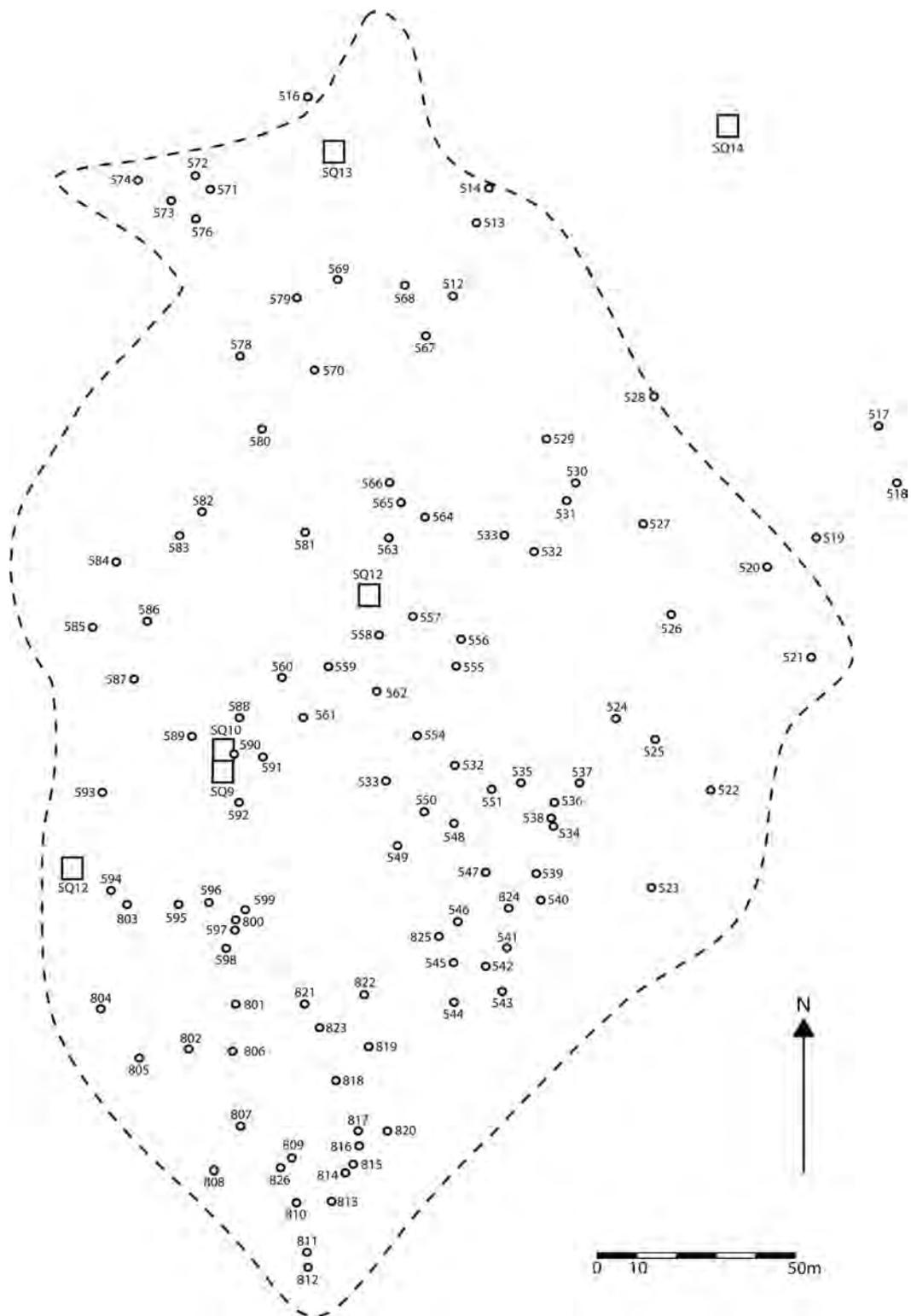


Figure 5. Area of rubbish dump (DD) at the Old Kinchega Homestead, indicating discrete dumping events that were identified as individual contexts. (Survey drawing by Matthew Levesley, redrawn by Michael Hawkes.)

Also, in Australian historical archaeology, many studies of household consumption and social practices concern early to mid-nineteenth-century colonial households. For most of Australia's earlier colonial history, outback regions lacked any European colonisation. As noted above, such areas were not settled until after the mid-nineteenth century, when 'squatters' were searching for what they believed would be suitable land for rearing mainly sheep,

but also cattle. For regions like the west Darling, the difficulties with transport and communication that played significant roles, first in the nature of their settlement and then in the nature of market access, continued into the twentieth century. These continuing difficult conditions meant that associated household consumption and social practices also continued to be different from more urban and semi-rural households. However, histories of

European settlement in such remote areas have focused on economic histories of Australia's sheep- and cattle-rearing pastoral industry rather than on these household conditions. As well as ignoring, until recently (e.g. Paterson *et al.* 2003; Harrison 2004; Paterson 2011), the important roles of Aboriginal people in this industry and its significant impact on their changed lives, these mainly 'white male' histories have also essentially ignored the domestic and social spheres associated with this industry, and thereby the 'white' women and children who were involved (see Paterson 2005, 2008: 8; 2011). The personal diaries and reports of some pastoralists' wives provide insights into the domestic and social conditions associated with the pastoral industry. However, in-depth analyses of the mundane material traces of the domestic lives of these men and women can bring greater understandings of their lived experiences in this environment – an environment which generally proved to be less familiar and more hostile than originally perceived, or hoped for.

Given the late colonisation of such regions and their continued relative isolation, this study embraces a rather later period than is common in historical archaeology. With the focus of most archaeological research on earlier colonial years, in Australia and other colonial contexts, few studies have been able to trace household consumption and social practices into the mid-twentieth century. While some historical archaeological studies in Australia have included domestic sites occupied during the twentieth century (e.g. Nayton 2011; Brown 2012; Prossor *et al.* 2012), they have tended not to focus on the household practices of this twentieth-century occupation. A lack of attention in archaeology to household material culture in the more recent past is also a more widespread phenomenon (see Symonds 2004: 33–48). Although contemporary archaeology is a growing research area (see e.g. Myers 2016; Caraher *et al.* 2017), as Rodney Harrison has emphasised (2016), much use of the recent past in archaeology has been for its analogical implications for archaeological investigations of more distant pasts (e.g. Mullins 2017). This is particularly true for ceramics and their classification for Australian historical archaeology (cf. Brooks 2005; Nayton 2011: 243–46). For Australia, archaeological studies which are able to investigate longitudinal change in households and that also traverse important transitional periods in Australia's colonial and post-colonial history are limited in number. This study of an outback homestead occupied from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century embraces some of these transitional periods when a developing, and seemingly fluctuating, sense of nationhood was making major changes to the concept of Britishness and its associated social mores (see Cremin 2001), and when rapidly developing communication systems were changing lived experiences across the 'Angloworld' (see Belich 2005; Lake 2013).

Despite its relative remoteness and particular landscape and its specific Australian context, OKH and its consumption practices were part of a global network. Its household practices are part of a global history of material-culture

production, distribution and consumption, and of social practice, with 'international flows and connections' (Berg 2013: 1), during a period in which the political, economic and social landscapes of many different parts of the British Empire were changing and moving towards political and intellectual, if not necessarily economic and socio-cultural, independence.

As outlined above, this study investigates food and drink consumption and associated social practices at OKH through evidence for tablewares and teawares. The micro-archaeological analyses of the artefactual and documentary evidence for the purchasing and use of tablewares and teawares at OKH provide insights into the relationships of changing market access and social mores to changes in the opportunities for the enactments of social interaction and in the meanings of these types of objects. Pavao-Zuckerman, Anderson and Reeves argue that '[f]ood practices are ... structured by local ecology and the economic status of individuals and households. The ability to distinguish oneself at the dinner table is ... a key [aspect] of perceived socioeconomic status' (2018: 373). This not only applies to what people eat and drink, but also the ways in which they do this, and the strategies they develop, in often hostile landscapes, to demonstrate their social standing and social aspirations.

#### **Material culture, new materialism and social agency**

This study investigates the active roles that material remains of household consumption practices, and their assessed values, play in social behaviour, and also the roles these objects play in informing on social values. As argued by Suzanne Harris, the value of artefacts is based on the desire for them, a desire that, in turn, is based on a variety of factors often involving 'complex biographies of production, distribution and accumulation' (2017: 694). Fundamental to this study of relationships between artefacts and social practice is, therefore, the examination of the 'consumption of objects within the frameworks of identity and social agency' (see also Spencer-Wood 2019: 266–67). In Australian historical archaeology, there have also been attempts to tie the price, quality and value of artefacts to such consumption practices, particularly for tablewares (see Brooks 2005: 61–62; Crook 2008). As argued by Clare Burke and Suzanne Spencer-Wood (2019: 1), 'over the past 30 years there has been an epistemological shift towards considering the importance of human cognition and choice in the creation and use of material objects, and [in] the embedded social nature of the relationship between people and material'.

Over 30 years ago, Arjun Appadurai had proposed that commodities 'like people have social lives' (1986: 3). He argued that the important conceptual features of the 'commodity *candidacy* of things' are 'the standards and criteria (symbolic, classificatory, moral) that define the exchangeability of things in any particular social or historical contexts' (Appadurai 1986: 14). At the same time, Igor Kopytoff (1986) argued that modern Western thought

has conceptually polarised individualised and singularised people from commoditised ‘things’, and stressed the need for a biographical approach to both people and things. Things, according to Appadurai (1986: 5), ‘are the stuff of “material culture” which unites archaeologists with several kinds of cultural anthropologists’. The latter, cultural anthropologists, have recently argued that ‘things render tangible or actualise in a performative way important aspects of social organisation, culture, systems of thought, or actions’ (Lemonnier 2012: 14) and can communicate encoded meaning. Fernando Domínguez Rubio further stresses (2016: 59) that we need to ‘think about the material world not in terms of “objects”, but ecologically ... in terms of the processes and conditions under which certain “things” come to be differentiated and identified as particular kinds of “objects” endowed with particular forms of meaning, value and power’. This applies to ‘the everyday, practical interactions between people and things’ where things are not purely markers of social standing but themselves have agency (Clarke 2014: 20).

Historians, too, have stressed the importance of ‘new materialism’ and ‘new materialist history’ that acknowledges the active roles of material culture and also the natural world in shaping people. Hans Schouwenburg highlights the particular significance of this ‘material turn’ in our understanding of people who ‘have escaped the written record’ (2015: 69). The people who occupied OKH are not the types of people who are well recorded in traditional histories. Their tablewares and teawares provide the best expressions of their social behaviour and their maintenance of social values in this specific environmental and industrial context.

In recent years, archaeologists have likewise argued for the importance of the holistic approach of ‘new materialism’ in radically changing archaeologists’ approaches to investigating the residues of material conditions of past human behaviour (Barrett 2016: 133–34). In particular, they have emphasised a ‘turn to ontology’ and a need for an assessment of a ‘symmetrical ... relationships between humans and things’ in terms of ‘entanglement and entrapment’ (see Hodder and Lucas 2017; see also Nativ 2018a: 7–8). As Ian Hodder and Gavin Lucas argue, while ‘humans make things and things made by humans make people’, the symmetrical relationship is broken down and becomes asymmetrical because the care that people often have for things is not reciprocated (2017: 136). People have emotional attachments to things, but not vice versa. Jane Lydon and Tracey Ireland (2005: 4) highlighted the ‘contrast between commoditisation and singularisation’ and the role of the past material world in sustaining ‘one’s sense of place and cultural identity’ in the current world, where objects, as well as places, ‘contribute to a sensory and emotional perception of belonging’ (2005: 1). However, Lydon and Ireland argue that the ‘very stillness of things masks [their] fluid shifts in meaning’ (2005: 11). While Lydon and Ireland were referring to our own attachments to material heritage, their perspective also applies to people in the past – their perceptions of their material world and

their emotional, culturally determined relationships with, and use of, the objects with which they were surrounded (see e.g. Tarlow 2012; Creese 2016).

This study of the OKH tablewares and teawares demonstrates that things have ‘social agency’ (Burke and Spencer-Wood 2019: 8). It also demonstrates that the people using seemingly mundane domestic objects have a culturally rooted relationship with them through which they evoke emotion and memory as well as signify social status, but a relationship that changes over the period in which this homestead was occupied.

### **Global history, social history, microhistory and micro-archaeology**

A further feature of this study, in its investigation of ‘things’ that are small and seemingly insignificant household items, is that these things are minutely analysed and the differences among them used for insights into changing local practices and the changing meaning of things, and the relationships of these changes to global systems.

Maxine Berg highlighted the importance of material-culture analyses in ‘global comparison and connections’ in economic history (2013: 5–6) and stressed the need for global historians ‘to work with the theories, findings and techniques’ of archaeologists (2013: 13). Here Berg’s concern for the concepts of ‘connectedness and entanglement’ in the ‘transmission of material cultures’ and the connection of ‘household behaviour with macroeconomic labour and capital markets’ for economic histories of colonial empires (2013: 10, 11) resonates with archaeologists’ concepts of the entanglement of people and things, and their meanings. Indeed, in the current climate of what might be termed ‘post-global’ politics and economics, and with Hamilakis’ call for a ‘decolonial archaeology’ (2018), Berg’s concerns are as pertinent, if not more so, for a global social history.

Berg’s arguments for ‘microhistory’ for economic history and for ‘smallness as a way of connecting to the large’ reiterate Sigurður Magnússon’s call for a microhistory ‘as the most effective reaction from within the field of history to the dilemma facing social history’ by reducing ‘the scale of observation’, ‘reveal[ing] the complicated function of individual relationships within each and every social setting’ and stressing ‘its difference from larger norm’ (2003: 709). At the same time, though, Magnússon argued that ‘no reconstruction of past time can be carried out without the assistance of metanarratives’ (2003: 716). He called for ‘the singularization of history’ as an inward-looking method that ‘turn[s] scholars’ attention onto the precise features of the events or phenomena they are dealing with’ and brings out their nuances, but without avoiding metanarratives (Magnússon 2003: 723).

Kristján Mímisson (2014) investigated how the singularisation of history might be applicable to archaeology. As outlined above, Kopytoff had critiqued a

'singularised' approach to people but the 'commoditisation' of 'things'. Mímisson argued for the 'epistemological strength of things small and ordinary' which are often 'smoothed over by grand and generalized narratives' or 'not thought to contribute to the grand narratives' (2014: 132). Mímisson is concerned with the 'ontological [condition] and strength of material culture and its narrative properties' and with 'scrutinizing the details of each event and object of research, looking for meaning within them rather than in larger contexts' (2014: 131, 133). He has called for a 'singularized archaeology' that also 'looks inward regarding the things at hand by honouring their nature as singularities, their intimate relations and ontological constitution' and 'how they reassemble into composite entities like practices, events or persons' (2014: 139). Charles Orser (2016) has stressed the particular relationship between microhistory and historical archaeology and the ideology of singularisation that can include metanarrative rather than macrohistory. He sees one of historical archaeology's 'primary tasks ... even within singularization, as understanding the social networks that operated within specific past historical contexts, and argued that these social networks 'exist on vertical [chronological] as well as horizontal planes' (Orser 2016: 180).

This current study's singularised, micro-archaeological approach to artefactual remains assesses the precise factors that characterise the assemblages of objects at OKH, horizontally and vertically. These factors then serve in the construction of the social identities of these things and in tracing changing social practices and social networks of the people who used them. It focuses specifically on ceramic artefacts and their active roles in the social activities of dining and tea-drinking at this homestead. In the British world, in particular, such social activities were important signifiers of the social mores and social hierarchies associated with Victorian ideologies of 'gentility' and 'respectability', and in Australia with codes of hospitality, defined and discussed in chapter two.

The materials used in such social activities formed part of the social 'performance' of these ideologies and codes (see Russell 1994: 1–91; Goodwin 1999: 40), and were important actors in their maintenance (see e.g. Roth 1961; Emmerson 1992: 1–27; for further references: Gray 2013). Linda Young (2003: 153–88) and Penny Crook (2008: 233) have emphasised the importance that the acquisition of, and investment in, such material goods played in establishing a 'genteel British' household in colonial Australia. Through the microhistories of the OKH tableware and teaware remains, their micro-archaeological contexts, and attitudes to 'Britishness', 'gentility', 'respectability' and hospitality in Australian colonial and post-colonial society, this study investigates how the occupants of OKH coped with British colonial, and also with more specifically Australian, social mores in this outback context. It explores the maintenance of these codes of social behaviour, the development of social worlds in this largely male domain, and the place of 'white' women in this regard.

As argued by Antonio Blanco-Gonzalez, 'the limits of knowledge are not inherent in the material record itself but lie in the mode of inquiry' (2017: 1104). Crook (2005: 16) noted the importance of an interpretative consumption approach from the outset of any artefact analyses (see also Crook 2008: 35). The artefacts collected by KARP were recorded and collated, from the outset, using an interpretative consumption approach to their identification and a micro-archaeological approach to their classification for investigating social production and maintenance (see Allison 2003: esp. 180–88). In this study, a selection of these artefacts – namely ceramic tableware and teaware remains – and the nuances of the various and particular social practices in which they played a part are analysed. This 'bottom' approach (Mímisson 2014: 150) crafts, in new and potentially subversive ways, material histories of individuals and groups whose social activities are not generally considered part of the macrohistories of British colonial and post-colonial histories. At the same time, it considers 'dialectics of scale' for these interactions, and their relationships to both local and global systems (Orser 2009). The 'microhistories' of these artefacts are used to provide fresh perspectives on social practices in this remote region of the British colonial and post-colonial world, and on how and why these practices changed over this important period in Australia's history. Thus, this artefact-based approach gives greater insights into social behaviour associated with one of Australia's globally significant industries – the wool industry. As Lin Foxhall noted, 'the entanglement of material objects with the habitus of human life has also a spatial dimension' and '[b]eyond the institutions of politics and states, the agency of households in devising their own ways of habituating space, whatever the parameters, has largely been overlooked' (2016: 326–27). Orser further commented that spatial analytical frameworks in singularisation 'are situationally determined rather than pre-determined' (2016: 178). This study demonstrates how the physical landscape, the socio-cultural context, and the industrial setting all played significant roles in the enactment of social behaviour at this homestead.

### **Monograph outline**

The following two chapters, by Allison, provide a social-historical context for OKH, its occupants and their household material culture. Firstly, chapter two discusses changing concepts of 'Britishness', and British and Australian social mores, some of which are conflicting. Here, it focuses in this regard on attitudes and social practices associated with food and drink consumption – especially tea-drinking and social performance, and associated mythologies of the outback. It also outlines any concern, to date, for the material culture associated with these social practices.

Chapter three commences with a brief description of the transport and communication systems in the west Darling region that impacted on the supply of goods to this region, during the period when OKH was occupied, and on the

lives of the people who occupied this pastoral homestead. It then analyses documentary reports of social practice in comparable outback settings, notably the diaries and letters of pastoralists' wives. It focuses on the evidence these written sources provide on the singularised outback experiences of and opportunities for social interaction for these particular women, and on their enactment of social mores. These written sources also provide glimpses of the types of material culture associated with food and drink consumption that were available to these women for any such social interactions, and of the values that they placed on these 'things'. These women's experiences – the differences and the common threads – provide references in the investigation of such social interactions over the period during which OKH was occupied.

Chapters four to seven, by Allison and Esposito, comprise in-depth analyses of over 2,000 ceramic fragments from some 800 tableware and teaware vessels recorded at OKH by KARP, and of related documentary sources (i.e. Australian mail order catalogues and the Kinchega Estate bookkeeping records). Chapter four describes the nature of the fineware ceramic assemblage collected from OKH. It discusses the approaches we have taken to dating these finewares, to identifying the various tableware and teaware vessel forms and their uses, and to identifying matching and complementary sets used for table settings for various types of meals at OKH. It also outlines how the likely cost, quality and value of these tablewares and teawares are used in interpreting the social significance of the various dining and tea-drinking sets identified in the following chapters.

Chapters five and six comprise detailed, largely quantitative analyses of these tableware and teaware remains to identify sets, matching and complementary. Chapter five analyses the different tablewares to identify different table settings used during the life of OKH, and their changing quantities and composition – from a number of small, complex transfer-printed sets to fewer, larger, more amorphous and plainer sets. It discusses the likely social significance of the various types of sets and of chronological changes to their quality, composition and meaning. Chapter six analyses the different teawares recorded at OKH and identifies the various types and sizes of these tea sets, and also what these tell us about changing social practices and social mores at the homestead.

Chapter seven analyses entries in contemporary Australian mail order catalogues and in the Kinchega Pastoral Estate's invoice books and stores journals, both dating from the 1890s until the 1940s and concerning the sale and purchase of tablewares and teawares. Other associated commodities listed in the estate bookkeeping records, notably tea and coffee, are also discussed. These records are analysed to investigate the purchasing procedures of the Kinchega Pastoral Estate, and to assess, more specifically, the relative cost, quality and likely social value of the various, mainly post-1890, tablewares and teawares recorded at OKH, and what more we might learn from these written records about associated social practices. This rare combination

of documentary and artefactual evidence, and its quality, has allowed microhistorical quantitative and qualitative analyses of this material and the investigation of these practices, and the roles played by market access, consumer awareness and social mores in such practices over the 80 years of this homestead's occupancy.

Chapter eight, also by Allison and Esposito, uses the analyses in chapters five and six to compare the quantity and quality of tableware and teaware sets among the OKH ceramics – the numbers, composition and types of sets – with those at other relatively contemporary sites. While chapter seven focuses on the purchasing of tablewares and teawares and the social significance of the post-1890 tablewares and teawares recorded at OKH, this chapter is mainly concerned with the contexts of end use of pre-1890 OKH tablewares and teawares which are not well represented in the documentary evidence discussed in chapter seven. It analyses relatively comparable, published data sets of ceramic remains from other, largely nineteenth-century, urban and semi-urban archaeological sites in Australia, whose occupants ranged from those who might be considered working-class to upper middle-class households. It uses these analyses to assess the likely social practices and social standing of the occupants of OKH, as compared with those of the occupants of these sites with greater access to relevant markets and wider social circles. While other sites have not generally included the type of in-depth analyses that has been carried out for these OKH finewares, we have attempted to assess the extent to which similarities and differences in table settings among these sites and this outback homestead are related to comparative social status, and how these comparisons can be used to map social practices and social values in this more remote household.

Chapter nine, by Allison, comprises analyses of specific documentary and oral records of not only the actual occupants of OKH but also their visitors, or likely visitors, to assess the types of people who may have 'come to tea' or dined with the homestead occupants during the various phases of the homestead's occupancy. The documentary sources and the processes used to identify such people, especially visitors, are somewhat different from those used to identify occupants of urban dwellings (see Minchinton 2017; see also discussion in Owens and Jeffries 2016: 806–807). In particular, Broken Hill and Adelaide newspapers sometimes reported the travels of the OKH occupants and visits by business associates, family members and other travellers to Kinchega. Also, former OKH occupants and their descendants have provided insights into some of the types of guests and the tea-drinking gatherings at OKH. Mullins argued (2014: 105), that such 'oral memories [usually serve to] underscore [the] complex and ambiguous meanings [of things]'. Here the information from the analyses of the OKH tablewares and teawares and archival records is interrogated in relation to these reports of the OKH occupants and their descendants, to cut through some of these ambiguities, to reconstruct some of the types of social interactions that took place at the homestead, and

to assess how these changed throughout its occupancy and the factors involved in these changes.

The concluding chapter, also by Allison, highlights the ways in which this study has used artefact-based analyses, and the microhistories of objects and their micro-archaeological contexts, to gain insights into changing social practices, social values and social aspirations at this homestead and, in turn, how the homestead occupants used these objects to maintain and display social mores in this particular context. It discusses how the approaches taken in this study have wider implications for historical archaeology particularly, but also in other branches of archaeology, and the study's limitation in this regard. It then discusses the contribution this micro-archaeological approach can make to Australian social history with more specific understandings of the enactment of social and gendered practices in the outback. Finally, it outlines ways in which this singular, local study may indeed provide new approaches, new information and new data for metanarratives but, at the same time, demonstrates the need to consider such localised conditions of colonialism and post-colonialism and the world of 'the "manmade" ideological package of the metanarratives' (Magnússon 2003: 721) in more global social histories.

This monograph includes 10 appendices which provide: a glossary for abbreviations and specialist terminology used in this study (Appendix 1); catalogues of the OKH tableware and teaware remains analysed in this study

(Appendices 2–4); catalogues of the relevant entries from the Kinchega Estate bookkeeping records (Appendices 5–8); a table of comparative quantities of tablewares and teawares at other Australian sites (Appendix 9); and a table outlining the occupants of OKH (Appendix 10). Appendices 2–8 are available online.<sup>3</sup>

Ann Stahl noted that, 'our understanding of frontier processes is incomplete without a consideration of indigenous populations whose lands were taken and life ways transformed' (2011: 94), and this applies to the area of OKH. The particular focus of this study and the nature of its evidence, however, mean it does not address questions concerning the impact of changing European settlement, communication systems and access to ever wider ranges of goods on the patterns of social life of Aboriginal communities associated with the pastoral industry here. This subject has been investigated in other parts of Australia, mainly at the community level, with investigations often driven by the documentary sources and focusing on economic perspectives rather than explicitly social ones (see Paterson 2005: esp. 42–44; 2008: esp. 163–83). While Lynette Russell (2016: esp. 51–52) has emphasised the significant role that material remains can play for better understandings of 'the richness of cross-cultural contact' in this realm (see also Paterson 2011), little material-cultural analysis has followed the microhistories of these life-ways transformations and their socio-cultural implications (although see Paterson 2011: 253–61).

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<sup>3</sup>These appendices are available as a digital download. Appendices 2–4 are sorted by catalogue number. The column 'reg. no.' will allow the reader to sort the entries by table number, as they appear in the text.