

## **Ceramics from the Old Kinchega Homestead**

### **PENELOPE M. ALLISON and AEDEEN CREMIN**

#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the fine ceramics that were excavated in 1998 from sample trenches from the Old Kinchega Homestead, in western NSW, and systematically collected between 1999 and 2002 from the household dump. It investigates how these ceramic remains can provide information on the domestic consumption patterns and aspirations of the inhabitants of this homestead, which was occupied from about 1876 until the 1950s.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is appropriate to dedicate to Judy Birmingham a paper on ceramics, for her own knowledge of this field has been influential in the practice of Australian historical archaeology. Many will remember her concern with the Irrawang and Lithgow Potteries. But her interests were not confined to Australia and she was in the 1970s innovative, as always, in studying traditional ceramic manufacture. Her 'Traditional potters of the Kathmandu valley: an ethnoarchaeological study' (1972) is a valuable work, reflecting the time's concern with 'mental templates', but still rich in useful insights. At that time several of the postgraduate students at the University of Sydney were researching ceramics: Christine Eslick in Anatolia, David Frankel in Cyprus, and Aedeon Cremin in Western Europe. Judy's expertise and her willingness to discuss ceramic technology was stimulating and helpful. Pim Allison was a student of Judy's at both undergraduate and doctoral levels. She learnt much about critical thinking and approaches to artefacts from Judy's teaching in Near Eastern Archaeology. And Judy's supervision of her doctoral thesis helped her stay focused during difficult times. Dedicating this article to Judy expresses some of our gratitude. From Kathmandu to Kinchega is a long way, but no further than Pim's work on the Roman frontier or Aedeon's at imperial Angkor. The common links are the questions about ceramics: who made them, who acquired them, who used them, who discarded them? At Kinchega, the first question is easily answered, since most of the ceramics are of standard British manufacture; the other three however require more reflection and we cannot claim to provide a full answer here, but only some clues for future reference. For Judy, therefore, a work in progress ...

#### **THE OLD KINCHEGA HOMESTEAD (P. ALLISON)**

The Kinchega Pastoral Station, in the western corner of NSW (see Allison 2003: fig. 1), was one of the earliest and largest in the region (Kearns 1970) and had one of the longest single leases. It was held in the name of Herbert Bristow Hughes from 1870 until 1967 when the eastern part between the Darling River and the Menindee Lakes System was turned over to the Kinchega National Park. The homestead, known today as the Old Kinchega Homestead, is located within the National Park close to the Darling River (Fig. 1). It was built by 1876 to replace

an earlier homestead on the river flood plain, some 600 m to the south (Allison 2003:172). It was abandoned in the 1950s when the New Kinchega Homestead was built nearer the woolshed (pers. comm. Noeleen Files 2000).

Since 1996, the Kinchega Archaeological Research Project (KARP) has been carrying out sporadic fieldwork at the Old Kinchega Homestead to learn more about domestic life at this outback homestead. The fieldwork has been carried out by various student teams from Charles Sturt University, the University of Sydney and the Australian National University. The first two fieldwork seasons comprised surveys and surface recording of the pre-European and European occupation of the Homestead area (Rainbird et al. 1997; Allison 1998). In 1999 and 2000 small-scale excavations were conducted in the main homestead building (Building A) and associated workers' huts (Buildings R and Y) (Allison 1999a, 2000). In 2002 sample surface collection was carried out on the homestead refuse site (Allison and Cremin 2002). This household dump lay about 200m north of the main homestead complex (Allison 2003: fig. 3). Refuse is scattered over an area approximately 160 m x 100 m but is comprised of discreet dumps that may each have been a single disposal event (compare King and Miller 1987).

Documentary and oral research has included interviews with former occupants of the homestead, notably Peter Beven and Jim McLennan who lived there as young boys in the 1930s and 1940s, Noeleen Files who also lived there as a child in the 1950s, Robin Taylor whose grandparents Arthur and Bertha Hayes occupied the homestead in the early decades of the twentieth century, and members of the Hughes family (see Allison 2003: table 1). These people have also provided many photographs and drawings of the homestead and other written records. In particular, Peter Beven has produced a sketch plan identifying the functions of the various buildings and spaces in the household complex during the 1940s (Allison 2003: fig. 4).

The principal objective of KARP is to investigate the role of material culture in developing our understanding of domestic life in rural outback Australia (see Allison 1999b; 2003). It is also to demonstrate the importance of a negotiated relationship between interpretations of material culture and of documentary and oral evidence in the archaeology of historical periods – whether of colonial Australia or of Greek and Roman worlds (see Allison 2001). The principal approach to domestic practices, taken in this project, is to use the material-cultural record to interrogate the documentary record, and not to merely catalogue the various material classes but to take a contextualized production-consumption approach (see Brown 1997; see also Allison 1997). The documentary record can often be directly related to the material cultural record, such as the terms used by contemporary potters and sales catalogues of certain types of ceramics. However, the relationship is often more complex and its readings by no means straight forward. Rigorous analyses of the material-cultural record, and on-going negotiations between the two records, can provide more nuanced understandings of regional and social differences.

This particular homestead is not a residence of the rural élite. The inhabitants, especially the women, children and workers, were not the sorts of people whose lives and activities are recorded in standard histories or whose household effects

are systematically inventoried (cf. Casey 2005). Rather, this homestead was home to managers and overseers and their families, as well as to gardeners, grooms and book-keepers. These people could make the best of the opportunities which their position here provided, and could aim to improve their social status in a colonial world with limited class structure. Such processes have a material signature in the archaeological record of domestic space. The material-cultural remains that are found under the floors, swept outside the doorways and in the household rubbish dump provide the most immediate evidence of the consumption practices of the homestead occupants (see Birmingham 1992).

The main classes of material culture that have been excavated and collected from Old Kinchega Homestead fall under the traditional archaeological categories of ceramics, glass and metal, with other organic remains (e.g. wood and bone), and artefacts of other synthetic fabrics (e.g. rubber). Of these categories the ceramics are the most useful for tracing the living conditions, social status and aspirations of the homestead occupants. Not only are they often the containers used to store and serve food but they are also, in themselves, consumed goods.

This paper examines the ceramics excavated from sub-floor deposits in sample trenches through the Old Kinchega Homestead and collected from the homestead refuse site. It investigates what information these ceramic remains can provide, as ‘consumed’ artefacts and as parts of wider material cultural assemblages, on the domestic practices of the Homestead inhabitants.

## **RECORDING THE CERAMICS (A. CREMIN)**

In order to contextualise and expand upon the corpus of ceramics collected from the excavation trenches within the homestead buildings, a collection was also made from the homestead refuse site. This involved:

- Firstly, total collection of artefacts from six 4 m x 4 m squares
- Secondly, all ceramic artefacts except terracottas and undiagnostic plain glazed-wares across the entire 160 x 100 m area.

Each sherd was recorded on paper at the time of collection and subsequently entered into the KARP database so that every object was examined at least twice. As the accepted historical-archeological descriptions seemed to lack any taxonomic consistency—as can be seen in a recent work by a respected practitioner where ceramics are described variously by decoration, paste and brand-name manufacture (Lawrence 2003: table 12.2) — we chose to describe the ceramics exclusively on the basis of the paste, applying terms derived from work on ceramic technology by Hamer (1977) and Leach (1976). Once paste had been determined we sub-classified by decoration. Brand names were noted and are tabulated below, as are equivalences with the terms used in Brooks’ *Guide* (2005). These are the classifications used by KARP:

1. Unglazed terracotta (Brooks’ redware): low-fired, soft, porous, of reddish colour.

2. Glazed wares: medium-to-high-fired, hard, non-porous. Most of the sherds were cream-bodied (CBG) with a white glaze, which could be left plain, be decorated with moulded rims, or be decorated with colour, normally in the form of one-colour transfer prints. Ware thickness from 4 mm to 8 mm. There were some darker-bodied stonewares (DBG) with a dark glaze, mostly used for teapots. Our CBG corresponds approximately to Brooks' 'whitewares' and the DBG to his 'buff-coloured wares'.
3. White-paste: completely vitrified wares. In this type there is no obvious difference in colour between the outer surfaces and the core of the vessel. Decoration is normally slight, overglaze gold bands being the most common, but about a dozen items have multi-coloured overglaze decoration. Ware thickness less than 4 mm. White-paste with elaborate surface treatment was also used for decorative items such as Toby Jugs, small vases etc. These are technically stonewares, but might be described as 'china' commercially.
4. Porcelain: similar to the white-paste, but translucent. It is very fine (less than 1 mm thick) and is present mostly in children's tea sets.

As all the objects were fragmentary it is not easy to determine exactly how many vessels are represented. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the *actual* numbers of sherds and the minimum *likely* number of vessels (MNV) in the major ware categories. It also shows how the wares are distributed by form. It will be observed that transfer-printed glazed wares are used for the whole range of vessels, while white-paste and moulding-decorated glazed wares seem to be confined to specific uses.

Ware	Plates	Cups	Saucers or bowls	Serving dishes and/or lids	Platters	Jugs	Other	TOTAL identified	Unidentif.- iable fragments
Terracotta DBG	Sh/V	Sh/V	Sh/V	Sh/V	Sh/V	Sh/V	MNV butter-dish? teapots, spittoon (1)	MNV 1 9	Sherds
Plain glazed CBG = ww	278/80	37/22	25/15	3/3				120	114
Moulded CBG = moulded ww	340/115		8/2			4/3		120	
Transfer-printed CBG =transfer printed ww	170/74	68/37	93/41	60/14	26/8	36/6	child's dish (1)	181	102
White-paste = vitrified earthenware		173/98	157/87				Toby jugs and vases (7), children's cup(1) and saucer (1)	193	311
Porcelain						1/1	children's saucers (7),	5	

							cup (1)		
TOTAL	788/269	278/157	283/145	63/17	26/8	40/9		632	527

Table 1. Actual numbers of sherds collected from the Old Kinchega Homestead refuse site, the likely MNV and possible forms.

### Place of manufacture

All of the cream-bodied glazed ware appears to have been imported from England (see Table 2). Some of the dark-bodied glazed ware may have been made in Australia; the most likely candidate is part of a spittoon which could have been made at Lithgow, NSW (cf. Evans 1980:115). There is also one fragment of terracotta with a maker's name probably from South Australia which reads '[M]aylands' (cf. Ioannou 1986:359).

MAKERS	DESIGNS/Name	DATES	REFERENCE	BROOKS	MNV
Blairs	<i>China</i> cup				1
Bristol, England	<i>Imperial</i>				1
Brownfield & Son	Rhine-pattern plates and dishes	1871–1891	Godden 1972:30–32	App. A. Figs 4.33, 4.38	38
Cobridge, Staffs					1
Cavendish					3
Colclough	<i>Bone china</i> cups	1900	Godden 1972:107		
Longton, Staffs					
Empire /E.P.Co	Dark-blue banded plates	1896–1967	Godden 1972:135		31
Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffs	Gilded sauce-boat base				1
[Furnival & Sons]	<i>Phoenix ware</i>	From 1871	Godden 1972:32–35		2
T.F. & Sons Ltd					
Cobridge, Staffs					
Gladstone	<i>Bone china</i> cups				4
Grafton	<i>China</i> cup and saucer				1
Green & Co. Ltd	<i>Gilded tea leaf</i> plate	From 1871	Godden 1972:170	Fig. 4: 24	1
Derbyshire					
Grindley	<i>Laburnum Petal</i> saucer			App. A	1
Thomas Hughes & Sons Ltd		From 1910	Godden 1971:73		2
Longport, Staffs					
Johnson Bros		From 1883	Godden 1971:73	App. A	3
Hanley, Staffs					
Johnson	<i>Britannia</i> teapot				1
Jones & Co.	Foot of plain dish				1
J&G Meakin	Light-blue banded plates	From 1851	Godden 1971:77	App. A	6
Hanley, Staffs	Feather rim- moulded plates				19
and					
Meakin SOL	<i>Centenary 1851–1951</i>				1
(from 1912)	Unidentified				16
J.M. & Co.	<i>Mayflower</i> cup and saucer				2
Made in England	Cup and saucer				2
Pountney & Co. Ltd	<i>Cuba</i>	1852–1969	Godden 1972:157		1
[Bristol]					

Soho Pottery	<i>Semi-porcelain</i>	1900–1944	Godden 1972:143		1
Tunstall, Staffs					
Swinnertons	<i>Luxor Vellum</i>				1
Staffs	<i>Fairy Meadows</i>				1
	<i>Chelsea</i>				1
Tuscan China	Ribbed plain ware cups				2
Wood & Sons	Fan rim-moulding with	From 1907	Godden 1971:100	App. A	22
Burslem, Staffs	gold line				
	Scallop-edged with relief				1
	dots				
	Unidentified				6

Table 2. English makers' marks found on ceramics at the Old Kinchega Homestead (NB. makers not listed by Godden {1971; 1972} or by Brooks {2005} are likely to be later than 1900).

The white-paste wares are more varied in their origin, with 104 cups or saucers made in Czechoslovakia ('Victoria' cups and saucers) or Japan (Noritake 'Radiant' cups and saucers). Of these 25 have gold lines around the top of the cup and inner rim of the saucer. From Japan are also two 'AC' and one 'Nippon Koshitsu Toki Co.' bowls. There is a single instance of Australian manufacture: a scalloped plate rim, base-marked 'Australia'.

We have not as yet been able to determine precisely where the nine different children's tea sets were manufactured; four sets are of Japanese porcelain with decal decoration; one of these (a Humpty Dumpty saucer) is marked 'Made in Japan'.

### Date of manufacture

It will be seen that only five out of our 23 British makers are included in Brooks' list of nineteenth-century finds in Australia. Comparison of our material with that in local and private collections in rural New South Wales suggests that many of the British ceramics are of twentieth-century manufacture.<sup>1</sup> This is certainly the case with the Czech and Japanese wares.

The Victoria-mark wares are from the Victoria Schmidt works at Karlovy Vary, formerly Carlsbad (Snodgrass website). The mark 'Czechoslovakia' dates the material after 1918—creation of the new state—and the hyphenated 'Czechoslovakia' to after 1938—after Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland. Both are present at Kinchega. It is tempting to identify our finds with the cup-and-saucers of 'Continental make' shown in the Anthony Hordern's catalogue for 1935 with three gold lines around the exterior of the cup and the interior of the saucer (1935:21). Alas, these are clearly identified as 'earthenware' whereas the Kinchega examples are definitely vitrified white-paste.

As to the Japanese material, Noritake was founded in 1904, specifically as an export company, and Japanese tea sets were already on sale in 1914 (Lassetter's 1914:384), but the trademark 'Japan' is confined to the period 1921–1941; that is the most common at Kinchega. The 'Made in Japan' mark is likely to be after 1940; we have two, one on the 'Nippon Koshitsu Toki Co.' bowl, the other on the Humpty Dumpty child's saucer. We have been unable to identify the 'AC' mark:

it could be a subset of Noritake, said to have had at least 400 marks (Nilsson website).

Toy 'Japanese sets were imported in considerable quantity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century' (King 1978:49); decals are said to have replaced transfer-printing (Savage and Newman 1985:180) and some of our decal images—dogs playing tennis and hockey, Popeye—are likely to date to the 1930s. The 'Made in Japan' Humpty Dumpty saucer must be 1940s or 1950s.

### **THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CERAMIC REMAINS (P. ALLISON)**

Distribution patterns of ceramics and their material-cultural assemblages from sub-floor deposits and verandah sweepings in various parts of the homestead complex provide information on the socio-spatial practices of the homestead occupants (compare Birmingham 1992; for similar approaches to household artefact distribution see Allison 1994; 2004). Because of National Parks restrictions, limited funding and the nature of the deposit of the various buildings of the homestead, only a limited amount of excavation has been carried out in specific areas. These have consisted of four 1 m wide trenches through different parts of Building A (the main homestead building) and one through each of Buildings R and Y (for location of buildings: Allison 2003: fig. 3).

The trenches excavated in Building A were placed so that they cut diagonally across two of the main reception rooms of the house, (rooms 4 and 5 – Trench 1); the bedrooms (rooms 7, 9 and 10 – Trench 7); the kitchen (room 3), bathroom (room 2) and what has been identified as the laundry or possibly a school room (room 2X) (Trenches 2 and 6); and the respective verandahs and areas immediately outside them (Fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> In rooms where there were fireplaces the trenches were situated to sample any associated underfloor deposits. As the verandahs off rooms 4–8 were cemented no finds related to the occupancy of the homestead were recorded here, although they were found in the areas excavated beyond these verandahs, where items would have been swept or would have spilled off the verandahs. Because room 4, the dining-room, had a paved mud-brick and cemented floor no room contents were recovered there. Given the size of the trenches and the nature of the deposit, a considerable assemblage of room contents was recovered beneath the wooden floorboards of room 5, the living-room, particularly around the fireplace. This assemblage included: a baby's nappy pin, seven buttons (one with taffeta attached), three beads, a rubber ring, a 1918 three-pence coin, a lead sinker, a whiskey bottle top, remains of a metal can, a cork, a remains of a clay pipe, glass fragments, a glass bottle stopper, and numerous nails, screws, a hinge and wood fragments. However, no ceramic fragments were recorded here. This assemblage points to the drinking probably of alcohol, smoking and perhaps sewing by the fireside, but no comparable evidence for consumption activities involving ceramics such as eating or tea-drinking.

In room 7 most of the finds from the limited excavated area were from the structure and fittings (e.g. linoleum fragments, window glass, nails). In the small area excavated in the northwest corner of room 9 finds below the floorboards consisted of a nail, a button, a bolt and a bone fragment. Room 10 had a concrete floor. A mixed assemblage was found to the east of the eastern verandah outside

room 7, including .22 cartridges; part of a shell button; and fragments of bone and glass, but no ceramics. The western verandah does not appear to continue outside room 10, where a large amount of material seems to have been dumped: screws, nails and washers; glass fragments, a considerable number of 44-gallon drum seals; a button; a bronze rivet, and bone, shell, glass, ceramic and lead fragments. The two ceramic fragments, found in the lowest excavated level, were a blue-printed white-paste teacup and a twentieth-century CBG white-glazed saucer. With the exception of these two fragments no ceramic remains were associated with the bedroom end of the house.

No contents were found in rooms 3, the kitchen, or room 2, the bathroom, both of which had concrete floors. Room 2X had wooden floorboards, the finds under which included nails, wire fragments, a cartridge and a metal cylinder; bone, glass and linoleum fragments; a bead, a cork, part of a plastic comb, a rodent skull, a fragment of crimson-coloured soft wood, and three ceramic fragments. The latter consisted of a fragment from a flow-blue transfer-printed CBG bowl, and two other fragments of CBG, one of which was probably from a bowl.

In the excavated area to the west of the western verandah outside rooms 3–4 were found numerous nails, glass fragments from alcohol bottles and jars, animal and fish bones, numerous cartridges and lead shot, a button, a safety pin, a slate pencil and a pen. Ceramic finds included at least three fragments from the rims of two different children's tea sets, one of white paste and the other a CBG saucer rim; four fragments from a white-paste saucer with a single gold line on the rim and around the interior, possibly of early twentieth-century Czech manufacture and from the same set as those found at the refuse site; another fragment of a teacup of the same style; and a fragment of a flow-blue plate.

In the area excavated to the east of the eastern verandah, outside room 5 (Trench 1), were found animal bone fragments, numerous nails, fragments from glass bottles and other containers, two beads, cartridges and fragments from at least nine different fine ceramic vessels. These included fragments from a CBG jug-and-basin washing sets, each vessel with gilded relief-moulded decoration, probably late Victorian, fragments of an 'oxblood'- glaze DBG vase, jar or possibly teapot, dated to the 1930s or 1940s, a fragment of white-paste teaware, a number of fragments of CBG kitchenware, and a minute fragment possibly from a Chinese ginger-jar.

Outside rooms 2 and 2X there had been a wooden verandah. Under this verandah and immediately to the east were found numerous pins, needles, buttons; the remains of a mirror; remains of carbon and slate pencils and chalk; and remains of two dolls, one the head of a German china doll (Cremin 2001:8; Allison 2003: fig. 9), probably dated prior to 1910 (Fainges 1991:12), and the other a limb fragment from a very small German bisque doll which is datable between 1880–1930 (Fainges 1991:27).

At least 31 fragments of ceramic vessels were also found here, some of the finest from the homestead. They included: fragments from possibly five different teacups, mainly CBG but one of very fine pink transfer-printed white-paste; a CBG saucer, white-glazed with gold lines; a brown-glaze DBG teapot or canister;



two willow-pattern bread-and-butter plates another willow-pattern fragment; a transfer-printed CBG lid; two fragments from a late Victorian Brownfields 'Rhine' plate (Allison and Cremin 2002, fig. 7), a fragment from a green-printed Asiatic pheasant dish from a different set from the blue-printed set found on the refuse site, two fragments from a blue-transfer-printed CBG teacup or a straight-sided bowl; three fragments of unidentifiable CBG tableware bowls; two fragments possibly from a transfer-printed washing set; two fragments of white-paste; and one fragment from the same decal-porcelain children's tea set as the one found on the refuse site (Fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> There were also two fragments of CBG kitchen ware.

Most of these fragments, and the two dolls, are likely to date prior to World War I. The fragment from the children's decal-porcelain tea set, however, suggests that the children, at least, were still 'taking tea' here in the 1930s–1940s.

LOCATION	WARE	Plates	Cups	Saucers or bowls	Serving dishes and lids	Platters	Other	TOTAL IDENTIFIED	Unident- ified
		MNV	MNV	MNV	MNV	MNV	MNV	MNV	Sherds
A02X	CBG			2				2	1
AO2Ver	CBG	1	1	1	1	1	teapot/ canister (1)	6	
	White-paste Porcelain		1	1			children's tea set (1)	2 1	
A02X	CBG			2				2	1
AO2XVer	Terracotta			1				1	
	CBG	1	3	7				11	3
	White-paste			2				2	2
A10 (west)	CBG		1	1				2	
AEVer	CBG	3			1		washing set (2), jar (1)	7	
	DBG						teapot/vase (1)	1	
	White-paste		1					1	
AWVer	CBG	1						1	
	White-paste		1	1			children's tea set (3)	5	1
R	White-paste								1
	CBG			1				1	
	CBG								1
Y	Terracotta				1			1	
	CBG								2
	White-paste						Demi tasse/child's jug?(1)	1	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>

Table 3. MNV for sherds collected from sample sub-floor deposits in the Old Kinchega Homestead buildings, and possible forms.

In summary, the distribution of ceramics from pre-abandonment contexts around the main homestead building (table 3) provide no evidence for eating or tea-drinking in room 5, although probably alcohol was consumed here. There are also no ceramic remains associated with the bedrooms at the southern end of house.

There is relatively little evidence for eating or tea drinking on the western verandah although it is evident that children played at having tea parties here. The majority of ceramic remains are from the eastern side of the house. Those from the verandah outside rooms 3 and 5 are associated with washing sets, tea drinking and eating. But the verandah to the east of rooms 2 and 2X, the 'laundry block', seems to have been the most likely place to find the women of the household drinking tea, sewing and mending, and the children playing and having lessons, possibly throughout the life of the homestead. The plethora of material under this particular verandah might be explained by the fact that it was wooden and not a concrete slab, as were the other verandahs in the main part of the house. However, there is also more evidence for ceramics from the concrete part of the eastern verandah than the western, and more evidence than under the floorboards in room 5. This side of the house was no doubt the coolest place to take tea on a hot summer's afternoon.

Building R is a slab hut (c. 5m x 3m) which seems to have been built, perhaps late in the life of the homestead, to house gardeners or other homestead workers (Allison 2003:179). A 1 m-wide trench excavated through this building revealed many artefacts on its north side, including metal items associated with eating, drinking, shaving, and shooting and catching pests, and large quantities of glass and metal remains associated with alcohol drinking. Most of this material seems datable to the mid-twentieth century, with very little, if any, that can be dated to the nineteenth century. Only four ceramic fragments were found here: three of transfer-printed CBG fragments from two tableware vessels, one Victorian and possibly recycled, and a fragment of white-paste. These fragments are rather too few to draw conclusions from but suggest that some social standards were being maintained by the occupants of this hut, who seem to have been one or two males during certain periods. Susan Lawrence noted that transfer-printed ceramics were present in single male households at Dolly's Creek, although more prevalent in households with women (Lawrence 1999:129–133, 2001:130–134), but generally prominent in rural, male-dominated, households (Lawrence 2003:217).

Building Y was a small building, c. 3m x 3m, referred to by Peter Beven as the 'Chinaman's hut' (Allison 2003, fig. 4). A trench through the sub-floor deposit produced predominantly nails and window glass fragments; shell and bone remains (some butchered ribs); a glass bottle stopper; a cartridge case, a bronze stud, a brace buckle, two brass taps, metal buttons, and a meat hook; and bitumen, yellow substance (possibly sulphur) and fragments of red rubber. Four fragments of ceramic vessels were found: two CBG fragments; the handle of a small white-paste vessel, possibly a small jug, demi-tasse or another part of a children's tea set;<sup>4</sup> and remains of an earthenware lid. A small fine jug or demi-tasse seems a strange find in such a rudimentary dwelling. If it is indeed from a children's tea set, it might document relationships between the children and workers in the homestead garden, perhaps Tom Kit who is recorded in the station records and who may have been the Chinese gardener living here about the time of World War I (1914–1918).

## **CONSUMER CHOICE (A. CREMIN)**

The definitions of ceramic types by visual identification of the body/paste are not ideal, but have been conventionally used by archaeologists in the past (for discussion see Majewski and O'Brien 1987) and have at least the merit that paste represents the most basic manufacturing process and is testable, through various kinds of elemental analysis. More importantly gross distinctions of paste were meaningful to the consumer, as we can see from the catalogues of the various mail-order firms which supplied outback properties. Lassetter's for 1914, for instance lists 'China', 'English China', 'Doulton ware', 'Cream Body', 'Ironstone China' and 'Semi-Porcelain'. These terms of course reflected not the actual constituent paste, but qualities of 'translucency' or 'fineness' which buyers could see for themselves and considered of value. However, as Penny Crook has also pointed out 'a consumer's consideration of quality may have been a choice of brand or consumer agency—i.e. the store—rather than evaluation for each individual product' (2005:19).

The long-distance rural consumer looked for security. The goods should be of sound quality, appropriately priced and replaceable: almost all items are presented as parts of sets, with 'replacement stock always in store'. There seems to have been relatively little interest in brand names for the catalogues name only a few makers, such as Doulton or Minton; the rest are simply described as 'English'. Marketing emphasised the 'neatness' of the goods, particularly the transfer-printed ones. Other terms used are 'reliable', or 'always popular'.

The target consumer for the catalogues seems to have been a conservative person, with some desire for elegance and a sense of 'propriety' in tableware and toilet furnishings. As to prices, they depended on the decoration; so in 1914 Lassetter's offered dinner services of 56 pieces of 'neat printed' for 27/6 to 32/6, or 'printed and gilt' for £2 10 shillings; while 'rich floral patterns' ranged from £5 or £6 for 71 pieces to as high £14 1 shilling for the York service, with 'High-class decoration in Old Dark blue and Red, Gadroon Shape. Burnished Gold Edges. Cream Body' (Lassetter's 1914:365). Most of the dinner wares found at Kinchega would fall into the 'neat printed' category.

### **Date of purchase and use**

It should be possible, in principle, to identify the likely dates for purchase of the Kinchega ceramics from the catalogues of general providers. Comparison between the Lassetter's catalogues of 1906 and 1914, however, indicates that the same goods were basically on offer over almost a decade. Even 20 years later there is surprisingly little difference between these and the range of goods listed in the Anthony Hordern catalogue of 1935. This suggests that 'fashion' was of less importance than reliability.

An important point about Kinchega is that this was a managed property: the Estate owners lived elsewhere and the families which moved in did not intend to stay forever, five to ten years being normal. Interviews with a number of present-day managers indicate that managers expect to eventually acquire their own property (by purchase or inheritance). They try to save as much money as

possible, to spend a little as possible on other people's houses and are supplied by the owners with basic household articles, including crockery and some linen (pers. comm. R. Cox, Cobar 2002; C. Palmer, Blackall 2000). A brief, and preliminary, investigation of the book-keeping records for the Kinchega Pastoral Estate revealed information on the composite purchasing of household items for all the properties belonging to the Hughes, not just the Kinchega Homestead.

More detailed investigation of these records may give information about which household goods were bought by the owners and when. Interviews with people who have owned, managed or worked on pastoral stations strongly suggest that many of the ceramics found at Kinchega were not chosen by the overseer families but by the owner or their agent.<sup>5</sup> From 1876 to c. 1890 the manager was the owner's son, for whom the Old Kinchega Homestead may have built and for whom the original set of household goods may have been acquired; successive residents then adding to the original collection. The Rhine and Asiatic Pheasants items, so common in nineteenth-century Australia, are very likely to have been acquired at that date. It is to the late 1890s' occupants we attribute the blue-banded Empire-make sets. These look very like the Federal service available in both 1906 and 1914 from Lassetters with 'Dark-blue border. Every piece gilt-edged'; the price of £5 9 shillings for 70 pieces did not vary between the two catalogues, suggesting this was a very stable commodity indeed and affordable, being in the median range of costs (Lassetter's 1906:291, 1914:363). The name 'Federal' suggests an initial design date of late 1890s–1901, cashing in on the Federation of the Australian colonies.

The Estate purchases do not preclude successive families from beautifying their surroundings by hanging pictures or putting up ornaments, but these are basically portable items and would not normally be left in the house. Some of the unexpectedly fine wares found at Kinchega may fall in the category of personal possessions which happened to get broken, e.g. a small porcelain cream jug or the white-paste vases and the elaborate washing set, the remains of which were found off the eastern verandah, outside room 5. Some of these could have belonged to the family of an overseer of whom there is as yet no documentary record, or to the Hayes family who arrived in 1915, staying till 1928, during which time three children were born.

The brief stays by the Phelands (1928–1931) and the McLennans (1931–1933) probably had less impact upon the general store of household ceramics than the longer stay of the Hayes family but these two later couples may have been responsible for the purchase of some of the Czech and Japanese tea-cups, of good-quality white-paste with gold lines, tasteful rather than ostentatious; in 1935 this type of cup was reasonably priced at 15 shillings a dozen (Anthony Hordern's 1935:21). The McLennan's son and daughter may have been the owners of at least one of the children's sets with decal images.

The Bevins, in residence from 1943–1947, also had one son and one daughter. The comments made about the Phelands and the McLennans could apply equally well to them. World War II obviously would have prevented the importation of material from Czechoslovakia or Japan, but it might have been available as leftover stock after the war. We take note here of Crook's comments

(2000) about the variety of ways in which goods can be acquired—bearing in mind that outback shopping is somewhat different from the inner city.

By the 1950s, supplies which had earlier reached Kinchega by river every three months were now available in shops at Menindee (15 km away) and at Broken Hill (130 km away), and shopping was done weekly by car (Allison 2003:189). Although the Files lived at Kinchega with two sons and one daughter from 1950 to 1955, the only ceramic item certainly dateable to the 1950s is part of a Meakin base marked ‘Centenary 1851–1951’. It is likely that this family took away all newly-acquired items when they moved to the new overseer’s house nearer the shearing shed, 4 km to the southwest.

### **THE SOCIAL USE OF CERAMICS AT KINCHEGA (A. CREMIN AND P. ALLISON)**

The ‘genteel performance’ was an important concern of Australian women in the late Victorian period (Russell 1994:1–91). Much of this concern was manifested through material culture as has been recently discussed by Linda Young (2003, especially 182–185; see also her contribution in Cremin ed. 2001:71–72). In isolated pastoral properties where entertainment opportunities were few, the preservation of gentility was also a form of self-respect: Miles Franklin touches on this quite movingly in *My Brilliant Career* (1901).

The social situation at Kinchega was interesting and no doubt changed over time. On the one hand from its beginnings the homestead was isolated simply by being within a very extensive property, but on the other hand the station was on the main paddle-steamer route of the Darling River and a handy stop for potential callers. The residents of the homestead may therefore not have had much choice as to whom they might entertain. That said, Arthur Hayes forbade his wife from letting hawkers and other paddle-steamer travellers enter the homestead (pers. comm. Robin Taylor 1999). The rooms to the south of the homestead accommodated the Hughes family when they visited from Adelaide (pers. comm. Peter Beven 1999) but E. G. Hughes (pers. comm. 1998) considered such visits extremely boring when he was a child in the 1920s.

Was there a women’s place where female visitors might be entertained while men were elsewhere? And what of such visiting children? Where did they go? The answer, widely adopted around the warmer parts of Australia, was on the verandah. David Malouf described South Brisbane in the 1930s:

When ladies come for morning or afternoon tea my mother wheels a Traymobile out of the front room...Visitors are entertained on the verandah and family and close friends in the kitchen (1999:14–15).

As verandahs had good light they were easy to photograph and there are many records of the use of the verandah, or immediately adjacent garden, for entertainment (PictureAustralia website). Most pertinent, perhaps, to the findings of teawares and children’s tea sets off the homestead verandahs is the photograph of an unnamed family from the Scone area ‘taking tea’ from a children’s tea set on the front steps of their house (Fig. 4). The remains of at least nine different children’s tea sets were found at Kinchega: at least four different vessels of one

porcelain set with overglaze decals of boy-dogs playing tennis (Fig. 3); very similar porcelain cup and saucer fragments, with girl-dogs paying hockey; cup and saucer fragments showing Popeye, quaintly in an Oriental landscape; an undecorated piece from a second porcelain set; a piece from a third white-paste saucer showing part of head, possibly Porky Pig, in underglaze print, or stencil, rather than decal; two more plain white-paste fragments; and one fragment from a white CBG saucer. Most of these objects are about the size of ordinary teacup-saucers and may have been display plates, rather than playthings, as some are of very fine porcelain. The last children's ceramics are the rim of a white-paste cup printed with a trousered elephant jumping through a hoop; and two fragments of yellow-glazed CBG with an unidentified underglaze scene. The wares are thin but robust and these items could have been used for a child to eat from rather than to play with.

At least one of the tea sets was used, possibly along with the other teawares, on the east verandah outside the laundry block during the 1930s–1940s and two others on the west verandah. One can envisage a child dropping the tea set on the wooden east verandah, a small fragment falling through the cracks and the other broken pieces being scooped up to be dumped. All the families who are known to have lived in this homestead had a least two children and at least one girl. The three little girls who lived in the homestead after 1931 were under five years old.

Not only are such tea sets and children's ceramics, together with dolls, pencils and chalk, important reminders of the presence of children in the domestic life of the homestead but they also provide insights into the socialising of children and the importance of developing genteel standards in the children's play in this remote arena.

Lawrence found comparable evidence for children's toys at the Moran Farm in South Australia but none was found in the lighthouse keeper's cottage at Point King, WA (Cremin ed. 2001:5–9), or in the mining township at Dolly's Creek (Lawrence 2000:135). Children are known to have lived in both places but no doubt experienced much more precarious conditions, with less time and resources for genteel games than the children brought up in a prosperous grazing property in the same period. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kinchega was benefiting from the ever-expanding wool-trade and its associated transport along the Darling to the railhead at Bourke, opened in 1885 (Lee 1988:171). Families moved on, but while at Kinchega they were comfortable, had a steady income, could enjoy some leisure, and even entertain friends in much the same way as they might have done in the towns of Bourke, Mildura or Adelaide.

Most of the ceramics excavated from sub-floor deposits were from Building A, the main residence. The finds from the homestead refuse site must include those from the other buildings as well, notably from Building B, the kitchen for the workers of the homestead. Some of the coarser CBG platters and dishes ceramics found at the refuse site may have been associated with the main homestead kitchen block (Building B). This kitchen had catered for all occupants of the homestead site until Mrs Beven had a kitchen built in the main homestead (room 3) in the 1940s, where she could cook for her family (pers. comm. Peter Beven 1996). Some of the white-paste cups in that site may have been used in the

workers' kitchen block for the many homestead staff. They are of good quality, but thick and heavy-duty, of the sort mass-produced for hospital, school or army use as mugs or 'breakfast-cups'.

This brief introduction to the ceramics at Kinchega shows their potential to reflect the history of the station in its broader context, from the British colonial frontier through to involvement in Federation and World Wars. The ceramics are of intrinsic interest, since relatively little work has been done on twentieth-century outback sites. We have come to this material through our other interests in the socio-spatial significance of material culture and by presenting this study to Judy as a work in progress hope to highlight some timely research questions.

The archaeological study of the Old Kinchega Homestead has indeed given some depth, and even personality, to the information previously available from photographic, documentary and oral sources. For example, these remains highlight the nature of children's lives and the socializing of children in this traditionally male-dominated world (see also Allison 2003:182–3; Davies and Ellis 2005). They also contribute to the question of gentility among those who are not the rural elite, nor the lower end of the scale, nor necessarily responsible for their own domestic acquisition. These remains force us to search through different texts, pottery catalogues or studies of antique dolls. They enable us to frame new questions for the former occupants and to go back to documentary sources to interrogate them anew. They also highlight the need for a better understanding of the material culture of rural Australia in the twentieth century, as well as the nineteenth century, a time of colossal political, technological and demographic changes. Personal observation from discussion with many rural families over the past decade suggests that rural households maintained conservative attitudes to material culture, often, indeed normally, referring back to mothers or grandmothers as people who knew 'the right way to do things'. Given the evident mobility of many such households, this conservatism is often found in the their moveable goods, rather than in the structural remains. Combining all these various forms of evidence can and will provide a more nuanced understanding of the lived experience of workers, women and children, in outback Australia.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Research grants from Charles Sturt University, the University of Sydney and the Australian National University have provided funds for fieldwork for the Kinchega Archaeological Research Project. Much information on the occupants and their activities at the Old Kinchega Homestead has been provided by former residents and their descendants, and by members of the Hughes family to whom we are particularly indebted. And Ian Pritchard is to be heartily to be thanked for his commitment and dedication to cataloguing the ceramics and for helping with their interpretation and presentation.

## **References**

- ALLISON, P. M. 1994. *The distribution of Pompeian house contents and its significance*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Sydney, UMI Dissertation Services no. 9400463, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- ALLISON, P. M. 1997. 'Why do excavation reports have finds' catalogues?', in C. G. Cumberpatch and P.W. Blinkhorn eds, *Not so much a pot, more a way of life*, Oxbow Books, Oxford, pp. 77–84
- ALLISON, P. M. 1998. The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project: Survey of the Old Kinchega Homestead 1998. Unpublished report for Cultural Heritage Division, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.  
<http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/archaeol/kinchega/>
- ALLISON, P. M. 1999a. The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project: Interim Report of Excavation of the Old Kinchega Homestead 1999. Unpublished Report for Cultural Heritage Division, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- ALLISON, P. M. 1999b. 'The Household in Historical Archaeology', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 16 (1998):16–29.
- ALLISON, P. M. 2000. The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project: Interim Report of Excavation of the Old Kinchega Homestead 2000. Unpublished Report for Cultural Heritage Division, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- ALLISON P. M. 2001. 'Using the Material and the Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space', *American Journal of Archaeology* 105:181–208.
- ALLISON, P. M. 2003. 'The Old Kinchega Homestead: household archaeology in outback Australia', *International Journal for Historical Archaeology* 7(3):161–194.
- ALLISON, P. M. 2004 (reprinted 2005). *Pompeii households: Analysis of the material culture*, Monograph 42, Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA). Companion website:  
[www.stoa.org/pompeianhouseholds/](http://www.stoa.org/pompeianhouseholds/).
- ALLISON, P. M. and CREMIN, A. 2002. The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project: Interim Report of Survey and Artefact Collection at the Old Kinchega Homestead Refuse Site. Unpublished Report for Cultural Heritage Division, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service).
- Anthony Hordern's *Mail Order Catalogue*, May 1935. SLNSW Mitchell Collection Q381.1409944/2.
- BIRMINGHAM, J. 1972. 'Traditional potters of the Kathmandu Valley: an ethnoarchaeological study', *Man* (N.S.) 10:370–386.
- BIRMINGHAM, J. 1992. *Wybalenna: The Archaeology of Cultural Accommodation in Nineteenth Century Tasmania*, The Australian Society for Historical Archaeology, Sydney.
- BROOKS, A. 2005. *An Archaeological Guide to British Ceramics in Australia 1788–1901*, The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology and The La Trobe University Archaeology Program, Sydney and Melbourne.



- BROWN, D. 'The social significance of imported Medieval pottery', in C. G. Cumberpatch and P.W. Blinkhorn, eds, *Not so much a pot, more a way of life*, Oxbow Books, Oxford, pp. 95–112.
- CASEY, M. 2005. 'Material culture and the construction of hierarchy: the Conservatorium site rubbish dump', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 23:97–113.
- CREMIN, A. (ed.) 2001. *1901: Australian Life at Federation: An Illustrated Chronicle*, University of NSW Press, Sydney.
- CROOK, P. 2000. 'Shopping and historical archaeology: exploring the contexts', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 18:17–28.
- CROOK, P. 2005. 'Quality, cost and value: key concepts for an interpretive assemblage analysis', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 23:15–24.
- DAVIES, P. and ELLIS, A. 2005. 'The archaeology of childhood: toys from Henry's Mill', *The Artefact* 28:15–22.
- EVANS, I. 1980. *The Lithgow Pottery*, Flannel Flower Press, Sydney.
- FAINGES, M. 1991. *Antique Dolls of China and Bisque*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst NSW.
- FRANKLIN, M. 1901. *My Brilliant Career*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney.
- GODDEN, G. A. 1971. *The Illustrated Guide to Mason's Patent Ironstone China: The related wares—'Stone China', 'New Stone', 'Granite China'—and their manufacturers*, Barrie & Jenkins, London.
- GODDEN, G. A. rev. and ed. 1972. *Jewitt's Ceramic Art of Great Britain 1800–1900 [1878]*, Barrie & Jenkins, London.
- HAMER, F. 1975. *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*. Pitman Publishing, London, and Watson-Guptill Publications, New York.
- IOANNOU, N. 1986. *Ceramics in South Australia 1836–1986: From folk to studio pottery*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide.
- KEARNS, R. H. B. 1970. *A Pioneer Pastoralist of the West Darling District: H. B. Hughes of Kinchega*, Broken Hill: Broken Hill Historical Society.
- KING, C.E. 1978. *The Encyclopedia of Toys*, Rigby, Adelaide.
- KING, J. A. AND MILLER, H. M. 1987. 'The View from the Midden: An Analysis of Midden Distribution and Composition at the van Sweringen Site, St. Mary's City, Maryland', *Historical Archaeology* 21:37–59.
- Lassetter's Complete General Catalogue* 1906, Sydney: F. Lassetter & Co. SLNSW Mitchell Collection 658.405/2.
- Lassetter's Complete General Catalogue* 1914, Sydney: F. Lassetter & Co. SLNSW Mitchell Collection 658.405/2.
- LAWRENCE, S. 1999. 'Towards a feminist archaeology of household gender and household structure on the Australian goldfields', in P. M. Allison (ed.) *The Archaeology of Household Activities*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 121–141.
- LAWRENCE, S. 2000. *Dolly's Creek: An archaeology of a Victorian goldfields community*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic.
- LAWRENCE, S. 2003. 'At home in the bush: material culture and Australian nationalism', in S. Lawrence (ed.) *Archaeologies of the British: Explorations*

- of identity In Great Britain and its colonies 1600–1945*, One World Archaeology series 46, Routledge, pp. 211–223.
- LEACH, B. 1976. *A Potter's Book*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Faber & Faber, London.
- LEE, R. 1988. *The Greatest Public Work: The New South Wales Railways—1848 to 1889*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney.
- MAJEWSKI, T. and O'BRIEN, M. J. 1987. 'The use and misuse of nineteenth-century English and American ceramics in archaeological analysis', *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 11:97–209.
- MALOUF, D. 1999. *12 Edmonstone Street*, reprint of 1985 edition, Vintage, London.
- NILSSON, J-E. 'Japanese Porcelain Marks', [www.gotheborg.com](http://www.gotheborg.com) (accessed 26/03/2006)
- PICTUREAUSTRALIA website, under 'tea on verandah' (accessed 26/03/2006)
- RAINBIRD, P., ALLISON, P. SCHMIDT, N. and WICKMAN, S. 1997. *The Kinchega Archaeological Research Project*, Report for Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Menindee Local Aboriginal Land Council and New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- RUSSELL, P. 1994. *'A Wish of Distinction': Colonial gentility and femininity*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic.
- SAVAGE, G. and NEWMAN, H. 1985. *Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics*, Thames & Hudson, New York
- SNODGRASS, G. 'Ginny's Bohemian & Czech Factory Marks', [www.collectorscircle.com](http://www.collectorscircle.com) (accessed 27/03/2006)
- YOUNG L. 2003. *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hants and New York.

---

<sup>1</sup> This information is derived from one decade (1995-2005) of interviews with members of grazing families in the area stretching from Longreach, Qld, through to Wagga Wagga, NSW; supplemented by visits to local museums within that area.

<sup>2</sup> Rooms 7 and 8, rooms 2 and 2x, and trenches 1 and 2 are transposed in Allison 2003, fig. 6. They are correctly depicted here.

<sup>3</sup> The previous identification of this fragment as part of a Japanese-porcelain demi-tasse is incorrect (Allison 2003:183).

<sup>4</sup> The identification of this piece as Chinese porcelain is incorrect (Allison 2003:180).

<sup>5</sup> See note 1 above. We are particularly grateful to members of the Allambie [Ladies] Club at Yass, NSW, for information on their families, many members of whom still reside in grazing properties created in the 1840s-1860s.