



Uranium miners cop another blow
What's new in the hotels business
The Farrow collection: for sale

This woman
encouraged
the killing of
Aborigines for
scientific research
in the 1800s.
Shocking new
evidence says
she was not alone.
And it's causing a
furore in foreign
museums

ANGEL OF BLACK DEATH

Newsweek
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The body-snatchers

Exclusive

COVER STORY

The battle to get foreign museums to return Aboriginal remains collected last century has reached new heights with the grim discovery that thousands of graves were raided and an unknown number of blacks

killed, all in the name of science.

DAVID MONAGHAN* reports on the war with museum staff in Britain that will have far-reaching consequences – and not only for anthropologists and Aborigines...



in the red dirt country of Central Australia, to point the bone to death on the coast, an offender against tribal law dealt with by the bone is jinxed for ever and will die.

For 200 years, scientists around the world have been collecting the bones of Australian Aborigines to study. This year, British and Australian scientists have found that their Aboriginal predecessors have left them cursed. The bones gathered by their and, according to new evidence, murder.

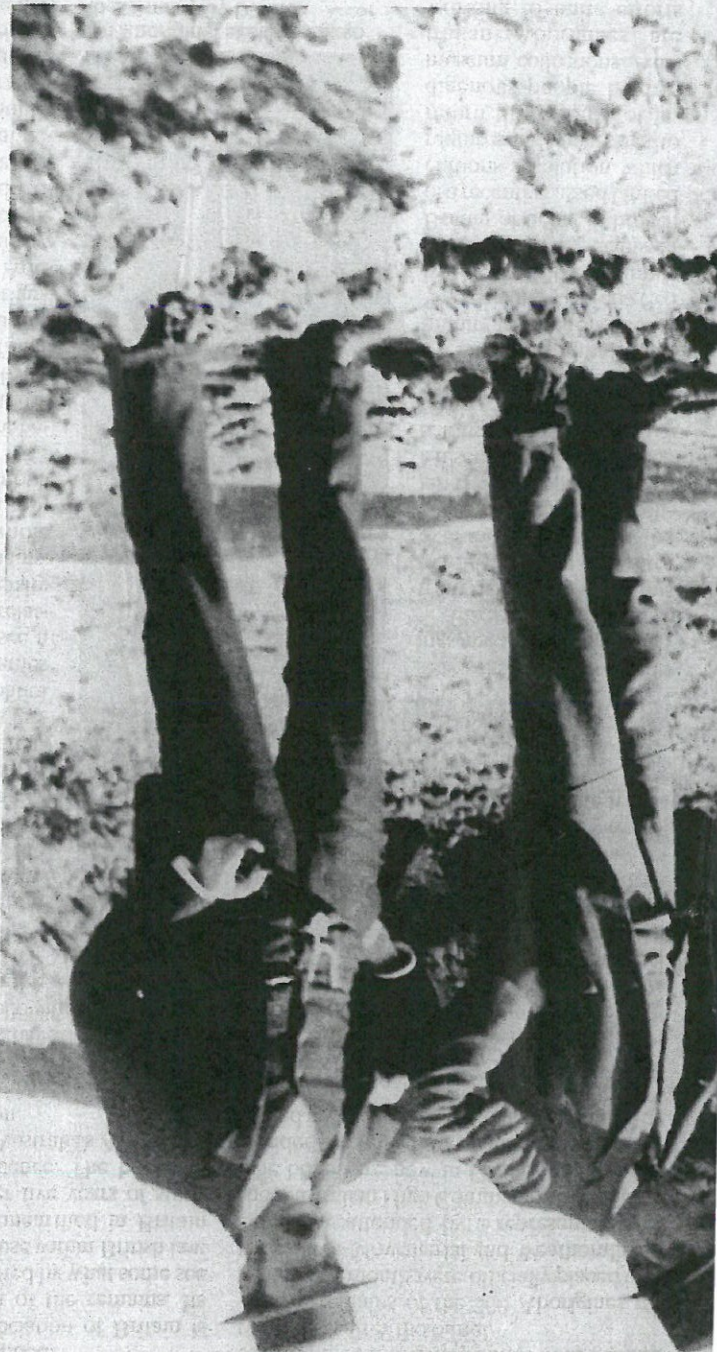
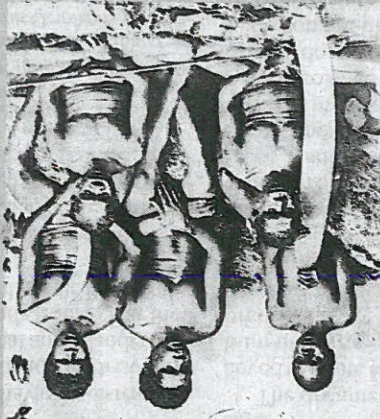
The way science, particularly in Britain, is dealing with those bones is the biggest test of black and white relations since the emergence of the land rights movement. The new evidence is that the bones were not necessarily the honestly rescued

souvenirs of erosion and road building. British and Australian scientists ran one of the biggest grave-robbing networks ever organised. Studies by an Australian academic researching in Oxford indicate the graves of between 5000 and 10,000 Australian Aborigines were desecrated, their bodies dismembered or parts stolen to support a scientific trade.

Worse, it appears that Aborigines were murdered to obtain specimens for science. Recently-discovered documents, including a diary found in an attic in Britain, confirm Aborigines were killed for display. Bodily parts from these murders may be in a museum in Hamburg, others from less specific massacres in London institutions. It is these discoveries that are raising the temperature of the dispute between Aborigines and world science.

Previously there had been religious objections to unburied bones being held far from home. Now, the dispute is taking on the dimensions of the fight by Jewish people over the disposal

Far left: Robert Etheridge Jnr (second from right) became the Australian Museum's director in 1895. His diaries tell how he robbed the graves of Aborigines. A girl's skeleton he exhumed at Dee Why is in the museum. Left: Russell River blacks. Etheridge's predecessor, Edward Ramsay, wrote asking for their skulls to be sent to him



photographs he had taken of Aborigines copulating.

Smith admitted at a government inquiry in Adelaide in 1903 to stealing skulls from Aborigines on the mortuary slab at Adelaide Hospital. Evidence included a description of an Aboriginal head sent to him in a kerosene

tin. Among the remains of 300 Aborigines returned to Australia on October 1 was one of Smith's victims. Poolapalinga Booboo-rowie, known as Tommy Walker, was admitted to hospital in 1901 by Smith and later died of natural causes. Smith deboned him. Walker's friends attended his funeral not knowing the coffin was empty. Police discovered the Aboriginal bones were missing two weeks after the burial.

The remains of the 300 Aborigines returned last month were officially placed into the care of Mowalljarai and Weatherall at a ceremony attended by a representative of the Australian High Commission in London. The bones are now in Canberra while it is decided whether they will be reburied, cremated or given a keeping place controlled by Aborigines.

Elsewhere in Britain, the Labour Party shadow minister for arts, Mark Fisher, is increasing pressure for the return of Aboriginal bones to Australia. Fisher has attacked Conservative Party policy on repatriations and says Labour will fully support returns. The issue is crucial. The return from the Natural History Museum requires a change in legislation. (The Australian bones are covered by a law passed in the mid-'60s to stop the overseas sale of British paintings and furniture.)

Further, any returns from the British museums would increase pressure over the repatriation of the Elgin Marbles, the Athenian treasures in the British Museum which have been a long-standing cause of friction between the Greek and British governments.

The Aboriginal community in London (led by Shields) and Australia (led by Weatherall) will launch a new attack, accusing Britain of being in breach of a recently passed United Nations resolution which requires all signatories to return the remains of indigenous people held in museum collections. Australian Aborigines are working to unite efforts

ain's collections since German bombings in World War II. Behind the scenes, British science has been severely split over what to do with the Aboriginal remains.

Some British academics have threatened to burn historical documents. The spectre of museum pickets and the shunning of some who sided with the Aborigines have fuelled the controversy. One story suggests a collection of Maori heads was returned only after curators were warned that the Museum Association of Britain is supporting the return of the remains. Its stance has been prompted by what some see as a blatantly racist clause within British law.

Anglo-Saxon bones unearthed in Britain must be reburied after five years of study under government licence. The bones of black people such as Australia's Aborigines have no such protection. The Edinburgh University bones have caused the most serious split. Members of different departments have not spoken to each other for years following disagreement about what to do with the collection, which is the nation's biggest.

October's repatriation took place only after the wishes of the keeper of the bones, Professor Matthew Kauffman, were overridden. Kauffman refused to allow Australian research in history and politics at Queensland's James Cook University, to see a trunk of documents relating to how the university acquired the remains.

"This makes the whole business of academic openness a sham," Turnbull says. "The documents are believed to relate to a trade in human parts run by a predecessor of Kauffman, Professor William Turner. Turner received Aboriginal body parts from Adelaide coroner Dr Ramsay Smith from 1903 to the '20s. Some of the documents apparently relate to a traffic in Aboriginal penis and there are also

Amalie Dietrich, the Angel of Black Death



of Holocaust material gathered by Nazi doctors.

Aborigines are demanding the resignation of the most powerful man in British archaeology following his request for more Aboriginal bodies for his museum's collection. Dr Robin Cocks, head of paleo-archaeology at London's Natural History Museum, said on the eve of the handing back of 300 remains from the collections at Edinburgh University that he

wanted more Aboriginal bodies. Cocks, who already has 14 skeletons and 103 skulls in his museum's collection, told viewers of a British television documentary, screened last month, that he wanted Australian Aborigines to donate their bodies to the museum. "I think that would be a perfectly reasonable thing to do," he said.

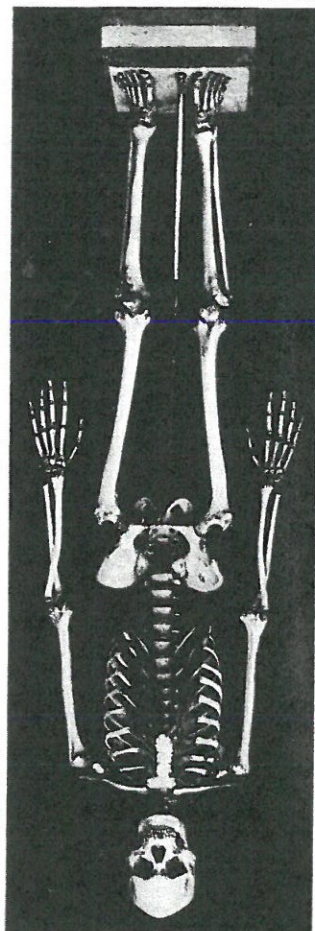
Rikki Shields, an Aboriginal artist in London known as the "Aboriginal ambassador to Britain" (see box, page 37), called for Cocks' resignation: "This man has offended the religious feelings of all Aborigines. He has to go."

The row has been fuelled by revelations about a preserved head kept in a Natural History Museum storage room. Recent research confirms the bearded head is almost certainly that of Yagan, a local Aboriginal hero shot and beheaded near Perth in 1833. The head of the leader of the Nuyngar people was smoke-cured in a gum tree, then shipped to England for phrenological examination.

David Mowalljarai, an elder of the Ngarinyun tribe in the Kimberley region and this year's Aborigine of the Year, and Bob Weatherall, an Aboriginal activist who has been lobbying for the return of the remains, were denied access to the head by Cocks at a meeting last month. The two were escorted to and from the museum by security guards. The 18 months before by Tasmanian Aboriginal activist Michael Mansell over its attitude to remains.

"It was shocking behaviour, disrespectful," says Weatherall, head of Brisbane's Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action. "They made it very clear they did not want us to break the collection in any way."

Museum keepers in Britain, such as Cocks, have much to lose: in the past two years, Australian Aborigines have been responsible for the biggest break-up of British collections in Australia on a date to be negotiated. *Additional research by Quentin McDermott.



An Aboriginal skeleton taken to Germany by Dietrich

with other indigenous peoples such as American Indians.

The situation in the United States is as serious as in Britain. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington holds the remains of 15,000 individuals of various races.

The skeleton of a Lismore elder, Neddy Larkin, is in the Harvard University Peabody Museum. Larkin's skeleton – the skull separated from the torso – is kept in an upper-floor storage cupboard. In 1881, a Lismore taxidermist who had befriended Neddy watched his funeral and then robbed his grave. The body was sold to the US museum in 1893, together with a collection of stuffed animals, stone tools and artefacts.

Larkin's descendant, Lillian Khan, is a worker at a Lismore women's centre. She did not know Larkin's remains had been taken out of Australia and wants them back as soon as possible. "I know that his spirit would not be happy there," she says.

Britain is likely to be under more pressure for returns following the publication of discoveries by Turnbull. He has just returned to Australia after 10 months' research on a history of physical anthropology in Australasia from 1800 to 1945. His work – along with the

discoveries in recent years of other Australasian academics, including Professor Henry Reynolds, an historian with James Cook University, and Dr Rae Sumner, a lecturer at the Queensland Institute of Technology's School of Languages and Literacy Education, and research by the British television documentary, *Darwin's Body-Snatchers* – indicates some of the greatest names in British science were involved in a body-snatching trade of huge proportions. Between 5,000 and 10,000 Aborigines had their graves desecrated, their bodies disinterred and parts dismembered.

George Rolleston, of Oxford University's Museum of Anatomy, and Sir Richard Owen and Sir Arthur Keith, of the Royal College of Surgeons, were involved. Charles Darwin is also implicated through letters written in the 1870s and found in a Hobart archive in the mid-1970s.

More disturbing is the evidence that Aborigines were murdered for the body-parts trade. A deathbed memoir written by Korah H. Willis – a gold-rush emigrant who became mayor of Bowen in Queensland and a candidate for the colonial parliament – found five years ago in a Surrey attic, contains a confession about the killing of an Aborigine who was later dissected for display.

Willis' five-page manuscript describes what happened in January 1865 during a series of "dispersals" of Aboriginal settlements around Bowen ("dispersals" was a synonym for killing raids). "On one of those occasions, I took it in my head to get a few specimens of certain limbs and head of a Black fellow, which was not a very delicate operation, I can tell you. I shall never forget the time when I first found the subject that I

intended to anatomise, when my friends were looking on, and I commenced operations dissecting. I went to work business-like to take off the head first, and then the arms and then the legs, gathered them together and put them into my pack saddle.

"Well, I took my trophies home to the Station that morning, and in the afternoon my friends were all going down to the Lagoons to fish and Bathe and I took some of my limbs to the Lagoon also to divest of its

Union Jack..."

The confessions of this amateur fit into a more professional program run at and near Bowen at

about the same time. Sumner is soon to publish a book on the work of German naturalist Amalie Dietrich, who collected specimens for the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg for 10 years until 1873.

"I'm certain Dietrich had Aborigines killed," says Sumner, who began visiting Germany five years ago to gather material for her book. In Hamburg, she discovered the cured skin of an Aborigine which had been photographed hanging on the wall of the Hamburg Zoological Museum in 1932. It fitted in with what she had heard from Jim Archer, who lives on Gracemere, a grazing property near Mackay which has been in the Archer family for generations. Archer's uncle, William, had told him an account of Dietrich's visit to the property in 1866.

Archer says: "This German woman wanted one of the Aborigines shot so she could get the skin – I presume, to take back to her employers in Europe to be mounted and stuffed". Instead, the homestead buggy was called for and the scientist was run off the property.

A history of the Mackay area published in 1908 corroborated the story: "On one occasion, she [Dietrich] asked an officer of the Native Police what he would take to shoot so and so, pointing to one of the Native Black Troopers."

It is understood that Dietrich was threatened with dismissal if she returned empty-handed. She got her remains, although exactly how is unclear. The Dietrich relics, including six skeletons, were in Hamburg until 1932 and may have been destroyed by World War II bombing. The Leipzig Museum holds the Aboriginal art objects gathered by Dietrich although they are not recorded on the museum's register.

Such is the current political sensitivity that evidence of the existence of the Dietrich bones has been sought by the Australian embassy in Bonn.

Britain's collections are similarly tainted. London's Natural History Museum has one of the skulls gathered by Dr Joseph Bernard Davis, a white supremacist who believed his measurements of Aboriginal skulls proved the race to be inferior. In 1866, he published an offer in a popular science journal from a station hand in Queensland:

"I will do my best to get some blacks' skulls. I have already mentioned it to several fellows in case they should have any accident in that way. I hear they shot two blacks only a day or two ago..."

In keeping with a trade in Aboriginal bones that developed last century, the Natural History Museum's collection of 117 Aboriginal skulls and skeletons came from several sources – about 18 from the Royal College of Surgeons, most of which was destroyed in a wartime bombing raid. The college collected skulls gathered from massacres and stolen from hospitals. According to a 1920 register, the curator of the Royal College of Surgeons' museum, Sir Arthur Keith, took delivery of skulls of two West Australian women "shot early in 1900 in a punitive expedition in which 40 native male and female were killed".

The college still has 53 other skulls in its dental museum that it will not return, despite expressions of sympathy for the Aboriginal cause. Their keeper, Dr Caroline Grgson, believes that the remains were genuinely obtained.

Evidence of killing is not restricted to Europe, nor the last century. One of the most chilling letters came following a public call for Aboriginal relics made by Queensland Museum director H. A. Longman in 1911.

Northern Territory cattle station manager Fred Story replied to Longman in 1917, including a photograph of seven naked Aborigines, one marked with a cross: "There was no trouble to get the nigs to take their clothes off. A shake would do it. The nig I marked is the official rammaker and I don't think it would be hard to cure him and send him along when he dies, which will be soon now. Would a strong arsenical solution do it? I suppose he would have to be cleaned out inside but I think I could manage it."

Story's next letter to Longman said: "Dear Sir, I am very pleased to say that I have a dead black (male) in a grave..."

The Queensland Museum says it does not have the skeletons referred to by the cat-teman. The museum has returned some remains but still has most of the 800 skulls and skeletons moved five years ago from its old



Korah Willis: killed a black

Ramsay's field system had freelance collectors as far afield as North Queensland who mixed skill gathering with hunting for the eggs of native birds. In May 1891, Ramsay wrote to a young science student, W. S. Day, who had camped in frontier country north of Cairns watching lyrebirds: "I shall be glad of any black skulls, not too much broken, they are worth at least five shillings each if perfect with the lower jaw, more - seven shillings and sixpence to ten shillings - for good ones. I would certainly get some of the skulls of the Russell River blacks." Four weeks later, Day wrote back: "I send you two skulls of Bungee [Russell River] blacks, the last of their tribe as they all got shot."

Ramsay went so far as to publish hints on how to rob graves. The 30-page booklet for his staff and public was reprinted four times until 1890. His instructions included: "Skulls of Aborigines found suspended around native dwellings are of little value but authentic skulls may be obtained from the graves of the natives of each tribe."

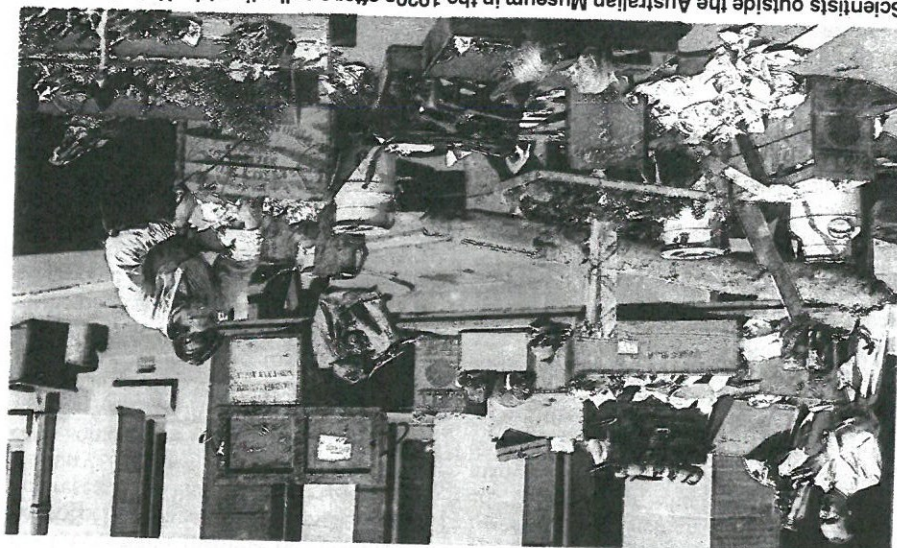
Under the heading "Mammalia", the book gave instructions about fresh specimens: "Plug any holes or other bleeding wounds with tow, wadding or rag." Ramsay continued: "The brains of our Australian animals are interesting and valuable... The brains of Aborigines so preserved would be of great value."

Races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world."

Within 20 years, Darwin's prediction was to come true in Tasmania. Darwin himself wrote, through one of his associate museum curators for pure-blood Tasmanian skulls, asking for pure-blood Tasmanian skulls if it would not upset the feelings of the remaining natives. There were then only four Tasmanian Aborigines left.

Darwin's theories had placed Aborigines as a possible evolutionary link between man and ape. Museum curators from around the world clamoured to obtain skulls. A complete set of racial crania was essential for any study. Australian Aboriginal skulls, particularly the increasingly rare Tasmanians, were much sought after.

The trade required a link man. That was Edward Pierson Ramsay, the first Australian-born museum director in the colonies and a willing provider of Aboriginal relics. He was curator of the Australian Museum in Sydney from 1874 to 1894. Ramsay's scientific trade reflected much about the system that scattered Aboriginal bodies around the world. The currency was not money but patronage, prestige and reputation. He swapped Aboriginal parts for rare specimens from overseas and, where necessary, his own betterment (A museum director in Florence offered him a knighthood if he could provide



Scientists outside the Australian Museum in the 1920s after a collecting trip. Note the skulls

The brains of Aborigines were being used to theorise on why the race was "difficult" to civilise. Pickled specimens were sent to England, Scotland and Europe. The results of those studies underlie what may be a more tragic legacy than the crimes and atrocities of a century ago. Aboriginal bones were used to provide evidence of racial inferiority. Twentieth-century racism was sanctioned and institutionalised by those and similar scientific studies.

In his recent book *Mismeasure of Man*, American scientist Stephen J. Gould des-

him a particularly "showy" display of Aboriginal relics.)

Ramsay wrote that efforts by the Queensland colonial parliament to stop the slaughter of Aborigines was affecting his supply. In 1882, he bargained with the director of the Colonial Museum of New Zealand for an exchange deal on tattooed Maori heads, Queensland and the 'Black Game' is over in ed now by more humane laws than formerly. So it is impossible to obtain reliable skulls and skeletons."

A Sydney newspaper of the time described the shipment of Aboriginal skulls as the colony's "new export industry". Traffic in Aboriginal parts followed the trade in tattooed Maori heads, for which Sydney was a distribution point. That trade became an open scandal when a hessian bag of human heads was put up for sale on a ship outside Sydney and the heads were rolled along the deck to the buyers.

The early interest in Aboriginal body parts was as curios or trophies and for the quasi-scientific study of phrenology. The fashion for phrenology - the reading of personality traits from the contours of the skull - provided some of the first overseas museum exhibits and a trade in bones. The British Museum began to sell its surplus heads at auctions during the mid 1800s - a good negro head selling for as much as a guinea.

By the mid-19th century, the scientific interest in the bones of Australian Aborigines was gaining popularity, as early Evolution theorists sought proof for rival ideas. The interest grew to a storm soon after Charles Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. A race began to prove his hypotheses. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin positioned the Australians as crucial proof of his theories: "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised

building in Bowen Hills. That vast collection of uncatalogued bones was known as the "dungeon of death" by Brisbane Aborigines, who feared spirits arose from there.

The "dungeon" at the Queensland Museum contained at least one skull with a bullet hole through it. Another body is believed to be that of an Aboriginal princess hawked to museum curators for £50 by a tin miner and Aboriginal shooter in 1882. The collector, Francis Lyons, describes how he got the young girl's preserved body "while in pursuit of miggins. It has a hole in the forehead, like that made by a bullet."

The collection of bodies by the public was not enough for the Australian museum collectors. They ran their own system of organised grave desecration to maintain supplies. The ongoing price for blacks' skulls was between five and ten shillings in 1890.

From the early days of the colonies, massacres offered a source of supply for skulls. NSW missionary Lancelot Threlkeld described an incident in the 1840s: "A large number were driven into a swamp and mounted police rode round and round and shot them all indiscriminately until they were all destroyed, men, women and children... but 45 heads were collected and boiled down for the sake of 10 skulls! My informant, a magistrate, saw the skulls packed for exportation... in a case at Bathurst ready for shipment to... England."

European dreaming

ed and financed it. "It still doesn't have an Australian distributor, yet here the British Film Institute bought the film for public exhibition and archival use."

Shields' family came from the Kimberley but he was born under a tree on the Katherine riverbed and moved to Darwin when his grandfather, a leprosy sufferer, was sent to Darwin's Channel Island leper colony. Growing up on a mission he was constantly in trouble with "the two Aboriginal nemeses - church officials and the police". He ended up a wharfie, working his way around Australia's coast.

But his dreams were troubled.

"I kept having this vision," he says. "I was the wild sea and a great blue rock where flocks of birds would soar. Loyalrama, the wind, would sing. Come with us to a time where you have your place." This dream was in my head for 10 years.

Then he found the rock, 80km from Burnie. "I sat

on the rock all night. It was there my totem, Kowmna, the sea-eagle, gave me the message from my ancestors to come to Europe. I retired and was given a redundancy payment. It was as if my ancestors were giving me the payment to send me on this odyssey."

Arriving in Europe, he set to work producing his film, wrote a book of poetry, was appointed artist in residence at Glasgow's Third-Eye Centre and gave lecture tours

1987, along with Aboriginal film director Tracey Moffat, he was arrested in Southampton for flying the Aboriginal flag in front of the Queen at the start of the Second Fleet re-enactment.

Because of the familiarity of Australian programs on European television, Shields says he is often asked why there are no

Aboriginals in *Neighbours*. "It was reported here that a new series of *Boney* was being made. I was regularly asked why a white Australian, Cameron Daddo, had been cast in the title role." His impish, normally smiling face darkens for a moment. "Whites are endlessly making document-

aries about us but won't give us a role. It can be a bit like body-snatching all over again."

—Jim Beason

Rikki Shields' Aboriginal features and slim, wiry frame attract wandering eyes in London. He stands outside the Natural History Museum, Kensington, where, he believes, hundreds of tormented Aboriginal spirits are entombed calling "we want to go home".

Film-maker, poet, photographer, Aboriginal rights publicist and tireless campaigner for European museums to repatriate Aboriginal remains, Shields is a driven man with a romantic soul. Few Europeans willingly endure Europe's four seasons more than once. Shields has experienced six European winters.

Shields says: "I know of only two other Aboriginals who live here permanently - Cherry Lee-Kiut, from Cherbourg mission in Queensland, who became a model in Europe and is now 71 and living in Holland. The other is a Koori man, one of London's homeless, for whom I've been searching for three years."

Shields wears his 50 years lightly. He is a softly spoken man passing for 30-

something, married to a red-haired English journalist he met at an exhibition of his poetry and photographs, *Manitara: The Land of Broken Dreams*, at the Commonwealth Institute two years ago. He has no plans to return to Australia.

"I can't because I don't have the right," he explains. "My ancestors told me to come here - they've given me money, given me friends and kept me in contact with my people back home because here lies a key. If us Aboriginals are to have a future, we need to know more about ourselves, the horrors of colonialism, body-snatching, how our people were locked up in jails, medical institutions... and libraries as historical curiosities."

"Some of us have been torn away from our language and culture. For us to get respect from the traditional people, who are our leaders, we have to bring out history back. If we fail, we'll be a lost generation forever with no past and no future."

Shields' journey of discovery to Europe has been frequently recounted in the European press and in his film *Journey of Discovery*, winner of the Maltese Film Festival's Golden Knight. He believes his film was the first completely independent Aboriginal production; he wrote, produc-

ed and financed it. "It still doesn't have an Australian distributor, yet here the British Film Institute bought the film for public exhibition and archival use."

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—Jim Beason



SARAH TURTON

Rikki Shields: he had a vision and a message

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Membership Has Its Privileges

the John Radcliffe Institute in Oxford are examining the development of man and even the history of diseases through old bones. That laboratory, however, has a policy of not testing Aboriginal bones until the ethics of such study has been settled.

"Believe it or not, we know very little about the Australian Aborigine," Brothwell says. "We don't know to what extent they are related in evolutionary terms to other populations in New Guinea and out into the Pacific."

"We don't know to what extent the Tasmanian people were closely related to the tribal populations [on the mainland] and so on. Although the material has been collected over a long period of time, we are only just beginning to ask many of the pertinent questions."

After the handing back of remains from even British museums and universities, however, a backlash is brewing. The American Committee for the Preservation of Archaeological Collections says: "Anyone who makes these [ancestral] claims seriously has a level of credibility that makes them an ideal prospective purchaser of the Brooklyn 'mummies'."

In Britain, one of Australia's best-known prehistorians, Dr John Mulvaney, rallied against the returns in a recent edition of the quarterly magazine *Antiquity*: "White treatment of Aboriginal society has been shameful... But past repressive colonialism does not mean that the present academic generations must pay the price by never opposing the claims by radical Aboriginal leaders. It is not to do so will be to replace white violence of repression with black intellectual totalitarianism."

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Last month, after David Mowajjalat stood in front of a case containing the heads of his people, he said he could feel their spirits, "The land still cry, cry for ever, looking at his child, that mother. The spirits are not in peace, not in their proper place."
Weatherall added: "They've got to go back in the ground. That's the only way it can happen. And the sooner the so-called great men of science come to realise that fact, then they might have some understanding, because it is obvious they have no understanding of our customs, our religion. They look at our ancestral remains like tools of the trade, like a spanner or a screwdriver, and using else."

... to arrange for transport of all half-castes to the Beagle Bay Mission. ... The half-castes are intellectually above the Aborigine and it is the duty of the State that they be given a chance to lead a better life than their mothers. I would not hesitate for one moment to separate a half-caste from an Aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief."

NHM's Robin Cocks: under attack

world races from a British Museum book of 1965. It cites a study of the last generation of Australian and British schoolchildren was taught about the races of Man, published in 1965. It cites a study of brain capacity as one of the delineating measures of the Aborigine race.

...shot and mustard seed into skulls to ensure their capacity. Gould recalculated yearly findings to show how the numbers have been fudged to give white races a greater capacity.

Museum shows. Aboriginal bones are being sought. The last body was lodged at the Royal College of Surgeons museum as early as 1965. In 1965, the Royal Anthropological Institute published its guide for members, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*.

which advises "it is often difficult to collect skulls and bones, but every effort should be made to do so".

generations. Scientists such as those at

embodies how racist theories of skull measurements, such as those of Frenchman Paul Broca, were enthusiastically embraced by Adolf Hitler's emerging National Socialist movement in the 20s.

Racial theorising on Aboriginal bones was not just a pastime for hidden laborers. Generations of British schoolchildren learnt of Australian racial positioning from Aboriginal skulls displayed behind glass. Among collections that Aborigines were returned from the Natural History Museum

the museum's 1921 public guidebook described them as "the Black Fellow ... perhaps the Royal College of Surgeons museum" rather regarded as low-grade Caucasians".

sted is Aboriginal skulls as "the most primitive of all existing forms of mankind". Most museums in Britain no longer display Aboriginal skulls. The Horniman Museum in South London has two skulls on show, including one of a young woman from the Broomie area.

David Mowatlarai, who belongs to a neighbouring tribe, gazed at this head during his visit to London last month. He has begun negotiations to try to bring about its return. The museum has confirmed it holds three other skulls, bought for between £2 and £3

In Australia, the theorising about racial
 differences resulting from studies of the skulls
 are used to justify laws governing Aborig-
 ine Queensland pastor/artist T. S. Gunn
 and science and politics in a letter to the

He wrote: "In reply to yours of 2nd March, I looked up a large hollow box tree where six blacks were buried but some other element of skulls.

There are many snarrels had been there... There are blackslacks about here now the so-called Abolitionists Protection Act has done its dreadful work. The poor natives have either been sent into slavery or sent to the death settlements on islands and other places... The Queensland Abolitionists Protection

dating from the beginning of this century based partly on a belief that the Aboriginal race was inferior to the white — a thesis put forward by scientists using measurements. This led to laws that segregated Aborigines from the white population.

the politicians making such laws referred to the findings of science. Craniologists such as W. J. Berry, in France, in Australia, supported a theory that Aborigines and other black races were less developed than whites. The evidence was that skull size

supposedly joined more slowly in black than among non-blacks. This is "evidence" of inferior intelligence effected the way Aborigines in the

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