We live in a material world, as the songs say, but decoding the objects of the past is not always straightforward. In this seminar, two leading practitioners reflected on the stories they have teased from objects.

_Sarah Hayes_ is a prominent historical archaeologist who researches quality of life and social mobility in 19th-century Victoria through the lives, homes and rubbish of everyday people. She is a Senior Research Fellow in the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University and has a passion for making
archaeological collections more visible. Margaret Anderson is a senior museum historian with a specialist interest in women’s history. Sarah and Margaret are collaborating on a new exhibition for the Old Treasury Building, Gold in Victoria: 20 Objects, 20 Stories.

The discussion was chaired by Margaret Birtley, Executive Officer of the History Council of Victoria and experienced museum consultant.

https://historycouncilvic.org.au/magazine/


oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/

deakin.edu.au/adi

artsonline.monash.edu.au/hist...

Way Back When
@WBWhistorians

Stories from objects: Tonight’s @History_Vic #MakingPublicHistories seminar on material culture at @OldTreasuryMelb with SarahHResearch @margaretotbmelb @margaretbirtley

5:19 PM - May 8, 2018

 понравилось 9  Просмотреть другие твиты Way Back When
Sarah Hayes
@SarahHResearch

Getting set up for @History_Vic #MakingPublicHistories talk tonight with @margaretotbmelb

What's the surprise object under there?

5:43 PM - May 8, 2018
About to begin discussion with @SarahHResearch
@margaretbirtley #MakingPublicHistories Stories from Objects
@OldTreasuryMelb
6:01 PM - May 8, 2018

See Margaret Anderson's other Tweets
Hannah Viney
@hvineyhistory

Ready for some history funtimes @OldTreasuryMelb and @Monash_Arts #MakingPublicHistories seminar on material cultures with @nick_e_louder and @alciaffaglione

6:04 PM - May 8, 2018

10 See Hannah Viney's other Tweets
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Back at the deLIGHTful @OldTreasuryMelb for another seminar in @History_Vic's excellent #MakingPublicHistories series - Material Culture: #StoriesfromObjects

6:08 PM - May 8, 2018

5  See Amelia Marra's other Tweets
Margaret Anderson
@margaretotbmelb

@SarahHResearch talking about gold Rush Melbourne & one of its hidden histories @Deakin_ADI @OldTreasuryMelb #MakingPublicHistories
6:13 PM - May 8, 2018

♥ 6  🌐 See Margaret Anderson's other Tweets
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels

.@SarahHResearch is telling us of two items from historical archaeology, both which tell a distinctive story about life in Melbourne during the gold rush period #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:14 PM - May 8, 2018

See Amelia Marra's other Tweets

abigail belfrage
@abigailbelfrage

At @OldTreasuryMelb with @SarahHResearch presenting the first object in tonight's #MakingPublicHistories seminar, an 1850s absinthe bottle. #AHF2018

10:25 PM - May 8, 2018

See abigail belfrage's other Tweets
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels
Replying to @Miss_Meels
The first is a green glass bottle discovered in Little Lon. Bookmakers, brothels, and associated with criminal activity. Not the best place to be raising children, though of course children were there #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:15 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels
Replying to @Miss_Meels
When the bottle was first excavated, there weren't records available to identify it. But nowadays, the label is just a google away and @SarahHResearch was able to identify that the bottle originally contained absinthe #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:18 PM - May 8, 2018
Margaret Anderson
@margaretotbmelb

#MakingPublicHistories @SarahHResearch @OldTreasuryMelb on uncovering lost lives of Melbourne thru archaeology & history
6:20 PM - May 8, 2018

See Margaret Anderson’s other Tweets

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
.@SarahHResearch - based on the contents of the rubbish pile, this was a ~higher class~ of brothel. Story starts intersecting with global ideas re absinth as 'the green fairy' 🍀 & broader material culture like absinth fountains #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:22 PM - May 8, 2018

See Amelia Marra’s other Tweets
Historical draaaaanks and archaeology with @SarahHResearch at the #MakingPublicHistories seminar at the @OldTreasuryMelb
6:22 PM - May 8, 2018
Hannah Viney
@hvineyhistory

Replying to @hvineyhistory
10 bottles of absinthe and 300 oysters found in a dig of a rubbish pit in Little Lon! @SarahHResearch suggests perhaps this building was not the grocery store the tenant claimed...
6:24 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
Objects excavated give a sense of the personal & that Little Lon really was people's home #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:23 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
Second story is about a chamber pot. Serves as a representative & starting point for the telling of stories. As @SarahHResearch points out, it sure is grandiose!
#MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:25 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
The chamber pot features misalignment in the transfer print - similar with some of the dining plates: the family was buying the cheaper versions of grandiose things - objects which were simultaneously 'flawed' & over the top #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:29 PM - May 8, 2018

Nicola Erin Ritchie
@nick_e_louder

According to @SarahHResearch 300 Queen Street, Melbourne is the only example of Georgian style architecture in the world's most liveable city. Ironically, the house itself wasn’t that liveable. #MakingPublicHistories
6:29 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
Women were the purchasers in the household - it's likely that these items were Ellen Smith's choices #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:31 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
The absinthe bottle and the chamber pot tell us little in their own right- it's the archaeological record & the info re where they were found that allows such a rich and personal story to be told by these otherwise humble objects #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:34 PM - May 8, 2018

Nicola Erin Ritchie
@nick_e_louder

Stories about objects, not objects used to supplement stories with @margaretotbmelb #MakingPublicHistories
6:37 PM - May 8, 2018

Way Back When
@WBWhistorians

@SarahHResearch uses two humble objects to examine everyday lives in 19th century Melbourne and discuss the limitations of using archaeological objects #MakingPublicHistories @Deakin_ADI
6:40 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
Now we're hearing from @margaretotbmelb who argues that unlike archaeologists, historians often don't feel at home with objects - with notable exceptions of course! #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:37 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
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@margaretothmelb's argument is that by and large historians pin stories on objects rather than use them as the starting point of stories, which archaeologists like @SarahHResearch do #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:38 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels

Clothing and style of dress function at many levels - historically as they do now - how we signal cultural affiliations, economic status, how we move around #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:40 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra  
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels

.@margaretotbmelb has brought a special treat for us - a one piece, full-skirted cotton dress from the 1850s. Note to self - sit in the front row for the next #MakingPublicHistories seminar - my view from the back...! 😞😍😢 #StoriesfromObjects

6:43 PM - May 8, 2018
Sarah Hayes @SarahHResearch

Revealed! Gold Rush era cotton day dress discussed by @margaretottmelb for @History_Vic #MakingPublicHistories

6:47 PM - May 8, 2018

❤️ 20  🌐 See Sarah Hayes's other Tweets
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
The dress is entirely hand-sewn - many a yard in the full skirt
#MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects
6:47 PM - May 8, 2018

Way Back When
@WBWhistorians

Historians are reluctant to use objects as sources (with some notable exceptions) says @margaretotbmelb and then proceeds to use an 1850s dress as a wonderful example of what objects can tell us about everyday life #MakingPublicHistories
@OldTreasuryMelb
6:48 PM - May 8, 2018

abigail belfrage
@abigailbelfrage

Wonderful analysis of an 1850s dress and what we can learn from it, from @margaretotbmelb#MakingPublicHistories #AHF2018
6:48 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
What does the dress tell us about the experience of everyday live in Victoria at this time?
Things to think about:
- the fabric - a light cotton, of good quality but not especially fine
- the cut - tells us that it's a day dress #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:50 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
.@margaretotbmelb theorises that this dress didn't belong to a working class woman, but rather a prosperous woman.

Skirt has over four yards of fabric - full skirts as a serious fire hazard! 😱 #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:52 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels

All this talk of 1850s dresses - and hilarious ST Gill illustrations-is making me miss the historic costumes at @sovereignhill! Need to go visit my favorite Crinoline Crew!

#MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:55 PM - May 8, 2018
Amelia Marra
@Miss_Meels

Replying to @Miss_Meels
Speaking of @sovereignhill - here's a blog from them about #goldfieldsfashion feat a delightful image "The Comparative Sizes of Belles" via New York Public Library 📚👗 buttonText
sovereignhilledblog.com/2012/02/28/gol… #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects

6:59 PM - May 8, 2018

See Amelia Marra's other Tweets

abigail belfrage
@abigailbelfrage

Replying to @abigailbelfrage
Dresses of this era were HEAVY. Many metres of fabric, a corset, and the petticoats alone might weigh 6 kg. #MakingPublicHistories #AHF2018

7:00 PM - May 8, 2018

See abigail belfrage's other Tweets
Sarah Hayes @SarahHResearch

A visceral exploration of the sheer unpleasantness and restrictiveness of these dresses for women in #GoldRush #Victoria by @margaretotbmelb
I love my jeans. Phew! #MakingPublicHistories
7:02 PM - May 8, 2018

Louise Blake @Littlegee71

Replying to @SarahHResearch @margaretotbmelb
Absolutely. Can better appreciate the complaints the women in my study made about being strapped to a packhorse while wearing them, though I hope they dispensed with the frame.
7:44 PM - May 8, 2018

Amelia Marra @Miss_Meels

Psst! Here's a link to the exhibition that the objects + the dress we've been hearing about will soon be featured in #MakingPublicHistories #StoriesfromObjects twitter.com/SarahHResearch…
7:11 PM - May 8, 2018

Way Back When @WBWhistorians

Professional historians well represented at tonight's #MakingPublicHistories seminar. Great to see you Louise, Emma, Michelle, Abi! @PHAVic
7:18 PM - May 8, 2018
Edwina Kay
@edwinathinks

Fascinating talks tonight at #OldTreasuryMelb thanks @SarahHResearch and @margaretotbmelb! Absinthe bottles, chamberpots and an amazing handmade dress #MakingPublicHistories
10:13 PM - May 8, 2018

History Council Vic
@History_Vic

There was a full house at last night’s #AHF2018 seminar in #MakingPublicHistories series - thanks everyone for participating! twitter.com/wbwhistorians/…
7:59 AM - May 9, 2018
Lucy Bracey
@LucyJBracey

Absolutely LOVED tonight's @History_Vic talks on #materialculture. Well done @SarahHResearch & @margaretotbmelb👏 Can't wait to see the forthcoming exhibition Gold Rush: 20 objects, 20 stories @OldTreasuryMelb
7:20 PM - May 8, 2018

👍 17  ⚙️ See Lucy Bracey's other Tweets