LOCATING THE PAST: PLACE AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN AUSTRALIA

It’s hard to ignore the power of place in Australia’s historical narrative: Botany Bay, Port Arthur, Myall Creek, and Ballarat all resonate in our national historical imagination. Place literally locates our individual and collective historical consciousness in the world around us—family, community and national narratives are bound by the places in which they play out. (Just think of the extraordinary annual pilgrimage to that place, Gallipoli.) But what do Australians actually think about historical places such as these? And how do they place themselves in the past?

This lecture draws on interviews with 100 Australians to explore the meaning of place in Australian history, and notes that even the past itself has become a ‘place’ of sorts in our historical consciousness.

The lecturer, Dr Anna Clark, holds an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship and is Co-Director of the Australian Centre for Public History at the University of Technology Sydney. She has written extensively on history education, historiography and historical consciousness, including: Teaching the Nation: Politics and Pedagogy in Australian History (2006), History’s Children: History Wars in the Classroom (2008), Private Lives, Public History (2016), the History Wars (2003) with Stuart Macintyre, as well as two history books for children, Convicted! and Explored!

Reflecting her love of fish and fishing, she has also recently finished a history of fishing in Australia, which will be published later this year.

Coming soon: The final Making Public Histories seminar for 2016 is ‘Bread and stones: historians using and preserving digital sources’. It will be held at State Library Victoria from 6 to 7.30 pm on Wednesday 16 November.