

Outstanding Contributions to Archaeology

Christine Williamson  
Penny Crook *Editors*

# Archaeology, History, Philosophy and Heritage

Essays in Honour of Tim Murray

 Springer

# **Outstanding Contributions to Archaeology**

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Christine Williamson • Penny Crook  
Editors

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*This book is dedicated to Timothy Andrew Murray, whose work has inspired each paper in this volume, and to Susan Bridekirk, without whom he could not have done it all.*

# Preface

This compilation has been in the works for just on five years. Most of the papers presented here were first drafted in late 2019 and early 2020. The effects of Australia's COVID-19 lockdowns took a large toll on two already overcommitted editors and this important project took a much-regretted backseat to the demands of running small businesses, juggling other research and personal projects. The delay should not detract from the fineness of the contributions in this volume, and while some are now out of step with other publications, they are soberingly as relevant now as they were when first drafted. Indeed, some points require restating many decades after they were first raised by the man at the center of this festschrift: Emeritus Professor Tim Murray.

We both have treasured our professional collaborations and friendship with Tim and his family over more than two of those decades. It is for this reason that we embarked on this editorial project and in the process have been delighted to reconnect with colleagues and acquaintances we have known for some years through the Tim Murray network and meet others we'd heard much about but with whom we'd never crossed paths.

This collection traverses a range of subject matters. Opinions are of the authors—not our own—and it is a testament to Tim's wider circle that some authors contradict each other.

You will note we asked authors to contribute a personal recollection about Tim. These contributions reflect not only something about Tim but his colleagues, including opinions Jim Allen has waited some years to put in print!

We are deeply grateful to all the authors for their well-considered patience during the many years compiling this volume.

Likewise, to the editors and production staff at Springer—Christi Lue, Enayathullah M, Solomon George, and Werner Hermens—we wish to thank you for your support and forbearance over this time, and assisting with the translation of Alan Schnapp's paper.

Many thanks to Nadia Bajzelj and Crystal Garabedian who assisted with proofreading.

Finally, we wish to thank Tim himself for sharing his papers and works, his generosity during interviews, for reviewing an earlier draft of the introductory remarks (and passing on the image that appears therein), his patience during the long delays, and most of all, for his contribution to our cherished field of knowledge.

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**Penny Crook** is an Australian historical archaeologist who specializes in urban assemblage analysis, nineteenth-century consumer studies and material-culture studies. She pioneered the examination of quality in historical archaeological assemblage analysis. Two decades of collaboration with Tim Murray on urban archaeology projects in Sydney and Melbourne have given rise to many co-authored works including the recent *Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Springer, 2019).

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Tim Murray's Research in Context



Penny Crook and Christine Williamson

**Abstract** *Archaeology, History, Philosophy, and Heritage: Essays in Honour of Tim Murray* celebrates 48 years of Tim Murray's significant and wide-ranging contribution to archaeological thought and practice. Here we introduce his work in the context of broad developments across the fields of archaeology, history, philosophy and heritage, and chart his 'maverick' journey through the discipline of archaeology in Australia and globally.

**Keywords** Tim Murray · Australian archaeologists · Archaeological theory · Heritage

By his own admission, Murray is something of a maverick in Australian archaeology and is not easily categorized. (Lucas, 2007, 155)

### 1.1 Introduction

Spanning six decades, five continents, and at least four disciplines, the research output of Australian archaeologist Tim Murray is vast in breadth and difficult to characterise. He is known as 'something of a maverick' (Lucas, 2007, 155) and is celebrated in different quarters as a theoretical archaeologist, a prehistorian, a historian of our field, an historical archaeologist, and a champion of heritage management. As historical archaeologists, former students, active collaborators, and good friends of the energetic man behind this work, it has been both a pleasure

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and a privilege for us to compile this volume of papers written in his honour. In the process, we have discovered subtle influences in the works we thought we knew and new insights into others less familiar.

In this chapter, we will introduce Tim's work in the context of broad developments in the fields of archaeology, history, philosophy, and heritage. We begin with a brief biography and include an introduction to the papers in this volume. This is an expansion of Crook's (2014) brief outline of Tim's contribution to the field, but makes no attempt to rival Gavin Lucas's insightful examination of Murray-mindedness in *Archaeological Dialogues* (Lucas, 2007).

We are grateful to Tim for taking the time to be interviewed in August 2020 and again in May 2022 and share his views on his own work, and the development and future of the broad field of interrogating the past.

## 1.2 From the Land: A Childhood of Curiosity on the 'Veil of Stones'

Timothy Andrew Murray was born in Sydney on 12 February 1955 and grew up on a pastoral station on the Darling River, on Barkindji<sup>1</sup> country, in north-western New South Wales, Australia. He was the fourth generation of Murrays to live there. His grandfather, Hubert Murray (1867–1957), was an amateur anthropologist and notable collector of stone tools (Murray, 2019b; Anonymous, n.d.).<sup>2</sup>

Pastoral runs in far western New South Wales in the 1950s and the 1960s were a 'place in between time' (Murray pers. comm.). The traditional owners—mostly Barkindji and by Hubert's account at least one Weembutchá group—lived on country on the fringes of vast grazing tracts. The arid landscape was replete with the lithic blades, grinding stones, and hearths of their ancestors.

As a child, Tim was free to explore this 'Veil of Stones' and his grandfather Hubert's cabinets of axes, pounders, grinders, and cyclons ('mystery stones'). The prized collection brought a network of antiquarian collectors and anthropologists to the Murray family property for decades after Hubert's death and was later bequeathed to the Museum of Victoria.

Tim has grappled with the complex duality of his grandfather's enduring fascination with the dialects, material culture, and customs of the 'Darling communities' that his great-grandfather dispossessed in his paper 'A Voyage Round My Grandfather: Australian Antiquarianism and Writing the History of Aboriginal Australia' (Murray, 2019b). Such reckonings are becoming an important component of discourse in Aboriginal reconciliation (heightened by the failed referendum

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<sup>1</sup>Also known as Paakantyi or Barkandji people. Hubert Murray identified a 'great number of dialect around this locality[:] it was the same within 60 miles three distinct languages were spoken' (Murray, 2019b).

<sup>2</sup>Some readers may see the likeness in Hubert's portrait published in the *Pastoral Review and Graziers' Record*, 16 March 1957.

on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in 2023) and the repatriation of cultural artifacts in Australia and across the globe.

This unique exposure to an extraordinary archive of material culture stretching back tens of thousands of years was not, of course, a necessary condition for the career that was to come. Tim maintains that he has no recollection of wishing to *be* an anthropologist in his youth (pers. comm.); however, his pastoral upbringing and the beginning of an education—free from the constraints of formal instruction—has had a clear influence on his research (see below).

### 1.3 A Journey to Knowledge-Making

Formal education awaited Tim at boarding schools in Bowral and Sydney. His peers at Sydney Grammar included ambitious and privileged young men, such as future Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. By his own account, Tim was not a model student but managed to achieve significant success at Sydney Grammar School as the top humanities scholar and won a scholarship to the University of Sydney. During these years, the foundations of his engagement with the past and associated discourse were already being built. He read Vere Gordon Childe's *What Happened in History* in high school and theory 'began to creep up on him' (pers. comm.).

Murray enrolled in Arts at the University of Sydney in 1973. Under the guidance of Bob Dreher (a specialist in the history of race theory) and Richard Bosworth (a historian of fascism), Tim explored the 'mire of nineteenth century race theory' (Murray, 2019b). His first BA dissertation, *Aspects of Polygenism in the Works of Robert Knox and James Hunt* (Murray, 1976), was supervised by Breher.

While studying history, he also pursued an interest in archaeology and anthropology. At the time, these subjects were heavily focussed on material culture, and Tim studied stone tools with archaeologists Peter White and Richard Wright, and the likes of Val Attenbrow and Glen Summerhayes. Peter White introduced Tim to the then quite new 'New Archaeology' of Lewis Binford, which 'was about the sum of theoretical archaeology at the University of Sydney during those years' (Murray, pers. comm.).

With the arrival of Roland Fletcher in his fourth and final year of studies (1976), Tim commenced the second leg of a double honours BA degree in history and anthropology (archaeology). True to form, his second dissertation was anchored in the history of archaeology with a significant focus on the archaeological thinking of Vere Gordon Childe (Murray, 1978).

### 1.4 The Public Servant: An Interlude

Concurrent with his studies, a change was afoot in the characterisation of Australian history and historic places. Following Gough Whitlam's election in 1972, there was a new focus on Australian culture and a new sense of pride in its colonial past.

The establishment of the *NSW Heritage Act* in 1977 was a response to the growing significance of heritage places and a fear that they were disappearing.

Tim's time at the University of Sydney coincided with the first historical archaeological program in Australia, led by Judy Birmingham. The focus at this time was on pragmatic teaching of this emerging field with opportunities for hands-on practice in archaeology and heritage.

1977 was very much a year of transition for Murray, as he was recruited to the New South Wales Public Service at the end of his time studying history and before he moved to finalise his studies in anthropology in 1978. It was during this period that Tim travelled to north India, beginning a fascination with the archaeology of ancient India that he pursued over five subsequent trips to the subcontinent.

Even after he resumed his studies (see below), Tim continued to be involved in heritage practice. He worked as a consultant on government surveys of the Kurnell Peninsula in Sydney and undertook industrial surveys in Lithgow with pioneers of Australian Industrial Archaeology Ian Jack and Aedeon Cremin. He also acted as archaeologist for the restoration of Australia's first steam locomotive at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney.

While short-lived and episodic, this work played a key role in shaping Tim's approach to large bodies of data, contextualising the politics of heritage work and establishing a network with archaeologists working beyond the academy.

## 1.5 Theory Building: 'A Luxury no Department Could Afford'

Tim concluded his honours in archaeology with the dissertation *Patterns in Prehistory: Vere Gordon Childe Reconsidered* (Murray, 1978). Plans to move to Cambridge to continue research into archaeological theory were scuttled by the death of David Clarke (1937–1976), so Tim began doctoral research at the University of Sydney. Here, further scrutiny of Childe's work revealed cracks in the theoretical armour of the revered archaeologist. Alternatives were needed and a long-standing exploration of the nature of time in archaeology had begun.

Tim's conceptualisation of 'Deep Time' is the best known of his contributions to theory-building. It was developed during several stints as a graduate student at Cambridge University and the University of Arizona in the 1980s—a break from the 'anti-theoretical' prehistory in Australia at the time (Murray, pers. comm.). It was here that Murray found like-minded scholars traversing the complex theoretical landscapes of prehistory, heritage, and practice in the aftermath of the New Archaeology.

By Harry Allen's account, Tim was 'pessimistic about his prospects as an archaeologist' (H. Allen, Chap. 12, this volume) following the completion of PhD dissertation, *Remembrance of Things Present: Appeals to Authority in the History and Philosophy of Archaeology*, at the University of Sydney (Murray, 1987). Options were limited and Murray soon found out that a theoretical archaeologist was 'a luxury no department could afford' (Lucas, 2007, 158).

However, in 1986, Murray was appointed Lecturer in Archaeology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, by Professor Jim Allen. Allen had an appetite for big-picture research but encouraged Murray to temper his interest in theory and get some fieldwork under his belt, so he 'could pass as being acceptable company' (Lucas, 2007, 167).

Controversially, the fieldwork that followed in Burghley, Tasmania, saw 36,000 years of history collide with late-twentieth-century post-colonial politics. A dispute over the repatriation of archaeological relics resulted in legal action that was 'misrepresented as a conflict between evil archaeologists...[and traditional custodians] about "who owns the past"' (Lucas, 2007, 167). Harsh words were spoken and codes of conduct were tested, but the research led to substantive contributions in the field of Indigenous-settler conflict. Evidence of violence by servants of the Van Diemen's Land Company against Tasmanian Aboriginal people was observed and played a role in the Australian 'history wars' (Murray, 1993, 2019b; Murray & Allen, 1995; Murray & Williamson, 2003). For Tim, the project was a lesson in the multiplicity of moral perspectives: conducting good research and respecting the rights of First Nations people (Lucas, 2007, 167–168).

## 1.6 Questions of Scale: Global Archaeology in the Antipodes

Beyond the academy, another change was afoot in the practice of archaeology in Australia. The passage of *Heritage Acts* in several Australian states saw renewed interest in the 'ground beneath the feet' of Melbourne, Sydney, and other urban centres. Tim took note that the vast archives of material culture excavated from sites like those from the nineteenth-century 'slum' Little Lonsdale Street (1988) were lying around in museum storehouses waiting further, and in some cases any, level of analysis. What began as a reanalysis of 'Little Lon' (Murray & Mayne, 2001) led to a larger-scale project involving seven sites in Sydney (Murray & Crook, 2019) and ultimately a direct collaboration on the excavation and analysis of material from the adjacent Casselden Place site (Mackay et al., 2006; contributions from Mayne and Mackay, this volume; Murray, 2019a).

Part of the success of these 'explorations in slumland' (Mayne & Murray, 2001) was the commitment to meaningful integration of historical and archaeological data. Extensive collaboration with Alan Mayne through all stages of the project allowed for a genuine interchange of knowledge and enquiry from documentary and archaeological resources (Murray & Mayne, 2001; Murray, 2006).

This integrative framework was transported north to Sydney where large-scale documentary analysis was conducted alongside assemblage analysis in the Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City (EAMC) project. Work on the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site in The Rocks (Karskens, 1999, 2001; see also Mackay, Chap. 24, this volume), a so-called 'slum district', enabled the ongoing exploration of urban poverty (Crook et al., 2005; Murray, 2011). The project also led to the exploration of colonial institutional sites including First Government House (Crook & Murray, 2006a) and the Hyde Park Barracks, which was the subject of closer

analysis in the years that followed (Crook & Murray, 2006b; Davies et al., 2013 and see Davidson, Chap. 17, this volume).

The significance of this work in the context of global comparative analysis of the modern world is discussed by Charles E. Orser Jr. (Chap. 16, this volume).

## 1.7 Undercurrents and Current Endeavours: The History and Philosophy of Archaeology

A mainstay of Murray's interests over the past five decades is the history of archaeological thought. He was the editor of the *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* from 2003 to 2014 and published the behemoth five-volume set, the *Encyclopedia of Archaeology* (Murray, 1999, 2001). His volume of essays, *From Antiquarian to Archaeologist: The History and Philosophy of Archaeology* (Murray, 2014), brings together his reflections over many years.

Tim's work in this field was recognised with the award of a Doctor of Letters in 2015.

Having served as Executive Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University during tumultuous faculty transformations (Murray, 2012), Tim stepped back from administrative roles in 2014. He remained Charles La Trobe Professor of Archaeology—an appointment made in 2010 in recognition of his 24 years of service to the university—until 2020, when he took up the post of Honorary Professorial Fellow (Classics and Archaeology) at the University of Melbourne. From his new base, he has continued to collaborate on old and new endeavours, including international fellowships (Fig. 1.1) and local projects such as machine learning for ceramic identification. He continues to mentor students and early-career researchers, and to publish new research about the history of our field (Murray, 2023a, b).

While he is no stranger to the spotlight, it is likely with some discomfort that he reads what we write about him now.

## 1.8 About This Volume

This *festschrift* volume includes 26 papers by Tim Murray's colleagues, research collaborators, and former students. Together these comprise a substantive and reflective contribution to archaeology, history, philosophy, and cultural heritage in Australia, Oceania, China, India, the United Kingdom, Northern Europe, and North America.

The book is presented in four parts—history, archaeology, philosophy, and heritage—each of which will be discussed below. Consistent with Murray's interdisciplinary approach to the study of the past, many papers could readily appear in more than one part, and we encourage readers to review papers outside their specialism.



**Fig. 1.1** Tim Murray posing with a triceratops in Drumheller, Canada, 2022 and no doubt reflecting on public fascination with our prehistoric past. (Courtesy: T. Murray)

Many authors have included personal remarks about their interactions with Tim over several decades. These appear at the end of each chapter.

A complete list of all of Tim's published works appears as an appendix to this volume. Devoted readers may find some unknown works therein.

### ***1.8.1 History***

This section ties together Murray's research into the history of archaeological thought, and his commitment to understanding the material culture of the past to 'write history'. It begins with a personal reflection on the development of

archaeology in Australia by one of its greatest scholars, Jim Allen, founder of the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University. Allen challenges the accepted wisdom of the dominance of Cambridge-trained scholars in the antipodes and argues that American theoretical influence is clear. This is of course evident in much of Murray's writings.

We then turn to Oscar Moro Abadia and Emma Lewis-Sing's argument that the history of archaeology—one of Murray's great passions—has been in decline since the 1990s. They describe the disinterest in the serious study of the history of the discipline and argue that the field is not only in need of a revival but needs to develop new ways of understanding and writing the history of the discipline.

Several studies of the history of archaeology in different regions and some histories of pioneering archaeologists answer Moro Abadia and Lewis-Sing's call. The first is Christopher Evans's study of Pitt Rivers, followed by and Gabriel Moshenska's reflection on the 1850 address to the British Archaeological Association by Thomas Pettigrew. We then present two papers on the development of archaeology in China by Li Liu and Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and Guohua Yang and another on the history of heritage preservation in India, by Nayanjot Lahiri.

This section ends with two papers focussed on the use of historical records to understand the past. Alan Mayne explores further dimensions of major urban archaeological research in Melbourne and Chris Davey explores the institutional history of mission stations in Victoria.

### ***1.8.2 Archaeology***

This section presents a cross-section of theory and research that well reflects Murray's diverse interests in archaeological inquiry. We begin with Peter Rowley-Conwy, who challenges traditional thinking on the interpretation of environmental data for archaeological purposes.

This is followed by Harry Allen's reconsideration of the cultural transmission of hunting and gathering practices in traditional Aboriginal societies and Geoff Clark, Phillip Parton, and Christian Reepmeyer's exploration of funerary structures in Ancient Tonga.

Moving forward in time to the modern world, Gavin Lucas presents a fascinating study of coinage circulation and Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory brings us up to date with a review of two decades of post-medieval archaeology in Greece.

Returning to Australia, Charles E. Orser, Jr. reflects on one of Murray's major contributions to urban archaeological research: the 'Exploring the Archaeology of the Modern City' framework (discussed above). This section is completed by an example of this broad approach of bottom-up archaeology as Hilary Davidson reviews archaeological textiles and clothing in colonial Australia.

### 1.8.3 *Philosophy*

This section draws on philosophical enquiries in its broadest sense: from archaeological theory to epistemological studies of shared lexicons. We begin with one of Murray's long-term collaborators, Norman Yoffee, who returns to Glyn Daniel's classic text *The Idea of Prehistory* (1962) to reflect on our current efforts to utilise knowledge of the past to address present-day challenges. We continue with another of Murray's collaborators, Alain Schnapp, and his exploration of shared memory through social monuments. Tania Hardy-Smith stretches the boundaries of archaeological interpretation with a fascinating review of archaeological evidence in a major opera production of the *Batavia* shipwreck.

Simon Holdaway, Matthew Douglas, and Benjamin Davies's review of the fundamental nature of archaeological explanation culminates in a call to see through the bytes to properly understand the complex interactions of people and things. Matthew Spriggs explores the history of the etymology of 'Lapita' wares, 'Lapita' peoples, and their associated terminology.

### 1.8.4 *Heritage*

Our final section explores one of Murray's great interests: the role of heritage preservation in our exploration of the past. We begin with Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Ana Pastor Pérez's fascinating review of the transition of the ways we appreciate heritage management from aesthetic considerations to economic ones.

Richard Mackay reviews shifts in the practice of heritage-driven historical archaeology in Australia, which has also seen a transformation from pure 'scientific' goals to more recent re-enactments and revitalisation of culture. Susan Lawrence considers the development of urban archaeology and its twenty-first-century future. James Flexner, Catherine J. Friedman, Ash Lenton, and Sofia C. Samper Carro turn their attention to a rural Tasmanian excavation which drew in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

We finish the section, and the volume, with a project that Murray considers one of his greatest achievements: the first dedicated tertiary training program for Indigenous Australia to learn cultural heritage management. This pioneering program has trained hundreds of First Australians to manage, research, and protect their own country.

## 1.9 **Concluding Remarks**

This volume presents a collective of insights from scholars who know Tim Murray, have been inspired by him, and worked alongside him for many of the endeavours described herein. Like the 'maverick' himself, the work is difficult to characterise.

We have contributions from practicing academics and practitioners, theorists, and a professional cellist. We discuss and debate opera, song, film, institutional histories, linguistic studies, paradigm reviews, and concrete explorations of material culture and place. This very much reflects the range and breadth of Tim's contribution to the field.

Connections and interactions interweave all of Tim's research: the intersection of race theory and archaeological knowledge-making, ancient and modern landscapes, trash, treasure, family history, and all the above. Spurred by curiosity and connection, he has an irrepressible fascination with knowledge in all forms—high and low. Despite being best known for his conceptual mastery, a grounded pragmatism forms the backbone of his research. The duality of thinking *and* doing has endeared many to his methods of collaboration and ensured the success of knowledge-making from 'deep time' to the modern day in nearly all corners of the globe. It is apparent, too, in this collection of essays, compiled in his honour. We hope he finds it a good read.

### **Remarks in Honour of Tim Murray**

I started studying archaeology at La Trobe University in 1984 when I was just 17. My passion for archaeology was sparked when I was 12 and our history class project was to make a model of an ancient Sumerian house, and from then on, I never wanted to be anything but an archaeologist.

My early university years were not a source of academic pride, as I struggled to find meaning and joy in what I considered to be rather dull course material. Then—bang—I took a subject on archaeological theory with Tim Murray. Who was this irreverent man who lectured while leaning precariously back on his chair with his feet on the table? And the material he taught; I had never heard anything like it. I was hooked and so began a lifelong love of archaeological theory and explorations of the nexus between material culture, history, people, and time.

Following the completion of my Honours project with Nicola Stern, Tim supervised my PhD dissertation 'Contact Archaeology and the Writing of Aboriginal History'. And by supervised, I mean long meandering lunches at the LTU staff club over a bottle of red wine where we discussed everything from history and archaeology to pop music and football. I revelled in the freedom of thought that Tim offered and his generosity in both sharing his ideas and acknowledging those that were mine. As we continued, and still continue, to collaborate on various projects, I remain grateful for his intellectual generosity and stand in awe of his huge brain box.

I like to refer to Tim as 'coriander'—you either love him or hate him. I am firmly in the former camp and thank him for the profound influence he has had on my academic and professional life.

**Christine Williamson**

### Remarks in Honour of Tim Murray

My first recollection of the eminent Professor Tim Murray is of a guest lecture he gave at the University of Sydney where I was an undergraduate student in the mid-1990s. I guess it must have been about his work at Little Lon. When asked what theory underpinned (subtext: justified) his research he boldly declared he didn't need theory to do historical archaeology. As a student who commenced her career in consultant archaeology and struggled with the vast disconnect between ill-fitting theories and all the stuff archaeologists had to actually analyse and interpret, Tim's response was captivating and liberating.

When I was choosing topics for my honours dissertation, I heard on the grapevine that Tim was returning to his home town to start researching historical archaeological collections from Sydney.<sup>3</sup> Keen to work on the artefacts from the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site in The Rocks, I was initially dejected and assumed there was little point making a start on something for an honours project that was about to be 'done right'. I was encouraged to pursue the topic nonetheless in case a small portion of the work might be of use to the future effort. Little did I know, that within a few years, that emergent research would form the basis of a collaboration with Tim that has stretched over two decades.

The Archaeology of the Modern City Project was Tim's brainchild and the opportunity to work on it was career-changing for me. It allowed me to develop and refine work practices, assemble resources, and explore aspects of the archaeological record in a way that consulting archaeology could not resource. It was Tim's unique flair for pursuing ambitious and unfashionable research—with uncertain outcomes—that allowed this all to be.

In the years since, I pursued a PhD under Tim's supervision and we have collaborated on several research projects, written books together, experimented with digital platforms, and remained good friends. I'm still using the EAMC circle template, circa 2002.

### Penny Crook

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<sup>3</sup>Side note: this work was done by fellow editor Christine Williamson, several years before we met.