

## Julianne Sew Hee's internship report

During my internship at Sydney Observatory I was involved in preparing the public workshop, 'Dig it! Hands-on archaeology', and a display in the Signal Station as part of National Archaeology Week 2010. I began my internship by familiarising myself with the history of the site and the story of Fort Phillip. After spending some time reading the Gunflints & Significants Contexts Reports prepared by Casey & Lowe, I began to source images for possible inclusion in the Signal Station display. I also did some research on early French exploration of Sydney, which provided a link to some of the French artefacts found.



*Julianne at Sydney Observatory*

Practical discussions relating to the display took place with Assistant Curator, Melanie Pitkin. Thought was given to the stories that would be told by the display as well as the location and sizes of the two showcases. The next step was to make an initial selection of items to be included. We chose objects that were representative of the domestic and military histories of the Signal Station as well as objects demonstrating the nature of the archaeological process, also including contemporary finds. After seeing the size of the showcases at the Powerhouse Museum, Melanie and I needed to reduce the number of objects, decide on the final list and select the images to be included. We sorted all of the objects chronologically and chose a selection. I then did some research on buttons included in the showcase in order to date them.

My next task, one which became ongoing, was to photograph and document the education collection. (The rules governing storage and use of 'education collection' objects are not as stringent as those governing objects acquired for the Powerhouse Museum's collection (which includes Sydney Observatory objects). Some education collection objects may be handled by the public under the supervision of Museum staff – as occurred in the 'Dig it! Hands-on archaeology' public workshop.)

Initially I provided a brief description and measurements. After meeting with archaeologist, Helen Nicholson, I was taught how to date and research glass and ceramics. I undertook this task for a few weeks. At the same time, I made contact with the National Gallery of Australia and the State Library of NSW in order to gain reproduction rights and access to the chosen images to be displayed in the Signal Station.

A few days prior to the public workshops, the display was set up in the Signal Station and the images were hung. I began to organise the materials needed for the weekend workshops and organised a few activities and worksheets to be used. With the help of some volunteer archaeologists, we ran the activities with the public. Visitors were able to date and sort glass and examine ceramics. Children washed artefacts on the first day, but I decided on the second day of the workshops that this was an ineffective activity, and they undertook archaeological drawing instead.

At the end of my internship I finalised the documentation of the collection and prepared the materials and handouts to be used for future workshops. A summary was written up explaining how the workshops were run and outlining the visitor experience.

My internship enabled me to gain valuable curatorial and research experience. I was also introduced to planning educational programs for high-school students, and planning and implementing public programs.