

## **ARCHE Seminar Series**

**Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution**

### **"Fire, Society and Culture: New evidence from 400,000 year old sites in the UK"**

**Presented by Professor Nick Ashton**

#### **Abstract**

The sites of Barnham, Beeches Pit and Devereux's Pit (Suffolk, UK) are revealing evidence of two successive human groups with distinct material cultures, the latter with controlled fire use. The sites date to the Hoxnian Interglacial (MIS 11c), at c. 400 ka. Palynology and molluscan biostratigraphy enable correlation with other UK sites with similar population turnovers. The talk discusses the evidence in the context of population incursions from Europe. The 'Cultural Mosaic Model' is presented which suggests the development of small-scale cultural groups across Europe during stable climate, with disruption during climatic cooling and population pressures, but the benefits of knowledge transfer and gene exchange. The talk concludes with the question of whether similar models might be applied to south-east Asia, with population expansion during cooler climate, but potential depopulation or marginalisation during climatic peaks.

Professor Nick Ashton works at the British Museum, specialising in the early human occupation of Europe. Over the last 40 years he has directed excavations at the UK sites of High Lodge, Barnham, Elveden, Hoxne and Happisburgh.

<b>Date/Time:</b>	<b>Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April @ 12pm</b>
<b>Room:</b>	<b>N78_-1.23 Brisbane South (Nathan)</b>