I will always remember the hard digging down the deepest trenches, the hoping and hoping for something special, the fine sieving, the heat and dust, and conversely the heat and rainforest humidity, and of course the local workers, the graduate students, and the many colleagues and past teachers … (interview with Peter Bellwood, 2011).

A brief introduction

Peter Bellwood is known for his decades of contributions to Asian and Pacific archaeology, responsible for formulating the fundamental chronological sequences of the region and situating these findings within broader contexts of human migrations, the ‘farming/language dispersal hypothesis’, origins and spread of Austronesian cultures, and interdisciplinary approaches to prehistory. The worldwide impact of Peter’s work is evident in more than 300 academic publications since 1967, translations and updated revised editions of his major books, more than 50 invitations as a key speaker in international conferences, and as supervisor to more than 30 graduate students who have filled professional positions in Australia, USA, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Laos, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan (see list of students this chapter).

Many of Peter’s colleagues link his name with The Australian National University (ANU) and with the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association (IPPA), which indeed comprised two of his chief occupations for some decades, among several other activities. Peter’s tenured posts began as Lecturer in Prehistory at University of Auckland in 1967–1972, followed by a succession of positions at ANU as Lecturer in Prehistory (1973–1975), Senior Lecturer in Prehistory (1976–1983), Reader in Archaeology (1984–1999), Professor of Archaeology (2000–2013), and currently as Emeritus Professor of Archaeology since September 2013. Concurrent with his employment duties at ANU, Peter devoted many sustained years of service as the Secretary or Secretary General of the IPPA (Figure 1.1) while also acting as editor of the Association’s
publication Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association, 1978–2009. Further, Peter has been a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities since 1983, a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy since 2016, a member of editorial boards of journals such as Antiquity, Asian Perspectives, and Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory, and he is the Honorary Editor of Journal of Austronesian Studies.

Born in Leicester, England, in 1943, Peter followed his interest in archaeology from a young age. He completed his academic degrees at the University of Cambridge (Figure 1.2), including a BA in 1966, MA in 1969, and PhD by publication in 1980. By the time of receiving his PhD, Peter had already published an impressive roster of works that continue to influence archaeological research today. His first academic publication in 1967 was concerning ‘A Roman dam in the Wadi Caam, Tripolitania’, printed in Libya Antiqua (IV: 41–44). Ever since then, Peter’s published work has been based on his years of research in Asia and the Pacific, including his pioneering directions in cross-regional syntheses and interdisciplinary coordination of archaeology with historical linguistics, human biology, and other perspectives.
One of the hallmarks of Peter's career has involved seeing the 'big picture' of regional and cross-regional archaeology, augmented by his direct field experience in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Talaud Islands, Brunei, western Malaysia, India, Sabah, Sarawak, Maluku, the Batanes Islands, northern Vietnam, southern Vietnam, northern Luzon, Taiwan, Bali, and Kalimantan. As early as 1975, Peter had already established his reputation as a grand synthesiser with the publication of an influential research article ‘The Prehistory of Oceania’ in Current Anthropology (16: 9–28). This early success was magnified with the publication of two books in 1978. *The Polynesians* (Thames and Hudson, 1978) was later translated into French (1983) and Japanese (1985). *Man's Conquest of the Pacific* (Collins, 1978) proposed a novel integration of Southeast Asian and Pacific archaeology, later re-printed by Oxford University Press (1979) and translated into Russian (1986) and Japanese (1989). Yet his major regional synthesis was *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago*, first published by Academic Press in 1985 and subsequently undergoing a number of reprints, revised editions, and language translations, with the latest fourth edition currently (2017) in production by Wiley-Blackwell as *First Islanders: Prehistory and Human Migration in Island Southeast Asia*.

Peter's insights into the interlinking of Asian and Pacific archaeology have been tied to the recognition of the widespread Austronesian-speaking communities, their language histories, and the connections between those language histories and archaeological evidence of the pan-regional spread of farming societies. This work has made Austronesian prehistory in the Asia-Pacific into one of the world's classic textbook examples of human migrations attested in archaeology. It has further been associated with the 'farming/language dispersal hypothesis', concerning how the world's major patterns of language groups reflect the migrations of farming societies in antiquity. Perhaps the broadest recognition of Peter's output regarding the Austronesian synthesis began with his 1991 research article ‘The Austronesian dispersal and the origin of languages’ (*Scientific American* 265/1: 88–93), followed in 1995 by the edited volume (with James Fox...
Interview with Peter Bellwood

In 2011, Professor Shuicheng Li of Peking University in Beijing invited Hsiao-chun Hung to conduct an interview with Professor Peter Bellwood, as part of the ‘World Distinguished Scholar Series’ of Journal of Cultural Relics in Southern China (Nanfang Wenwu). Twelve questions were asked by Hung about Peter’s student life, research career, current work, and the role of Chinese archaeology. The completed version of the 2011 interview was translated by Hung into Chinese and then published by the journal in China during the same year (Bellwood and Hung 2011). In the interview, Peter talked about his study of ancient Austronesian migration, the development and testing of the ‘farming/language dispersal hypothesis’, and the significance of Neolithic farmers in worldwide perspective. He additionally gave valuable advice for students who are interested in studying archaeology. The following interview record is based on the 2011 version, with a few new questions added in January 2015.

Q1: You have been known as the representative figure of research on Southeast Asian and Pacific archaeology since the 1970s. Could you please tell us how your interest started in this region?

I became interested in archaeology at age 17 in 1960, through reading popular books on the topic. At this time, I was an apprentice shoe machinery worker in Leicester, England, my city of birth. After finishing my university entrance studies I was able to get a State Scholarship to Cambridge University (King’s College) in 1963, where I studied Roman and European archaeology for my
BA degree (1966) (Figure 1.3). The professor at that time was Grahame Clark, an authority on economic archaeology and the European Mesolithic. I was also taught by Edmund Leach (social anthropology), Glyn Daniel (European Neolithic), John Coles (European archaeology), Eric Higgs (economic archaeology), Brian Hope-Taylor (Anglo-Saxon archaeology) and Joan Liversidge (Roman archaeology). As a student I was able to take part in archaeological field projects in Tunisia, Libya, France, Denmark, Turkey and Iran, as well as on Roman and Medieval excavations in England.

My Cambridge archaeology background always kept me interested in the relations between archaeology, history and human culture. I was still an undergraduate student when the 'New Archaeology' hit American and British archaeology in the mid-1960s, but I was never able to develop an interest in the more mechanistic aspects of this rather anti-historical approach to the human past. History, evolution and migration always remained my central interests, as they are today. As a student I became very interested in the archaeology of Polynesia, through reading the writings of the pioneer archaeologist Robert Suggs. Polynesia in the 1960s was a very romantic place, and the scene of a great human migration that had puzzled Western minds for over 200 years. In 1966, I applied for a job as a lecturer in archaeology at Auckland University in New Zealand, and emigrated from England to New Zealand in early 1967, then aged 23 and still without a PhD. At that time, the expansion of universities in the British Commonwealth was so strong that people with specialised bachelor degrees from Oxford and Cambridge were able to get tenurable teaching positions. This would be unthinkable nowadays, and a PhD is rightly essential for all advancement. I received my PhD from Cambridge in 1980, after submitting four of my books and monographs in lieu of writing a thesis (Cambridge University had special regulations to allow this for its former students who, like me, had full-time teaching positions and hence were unable to devote three years to writing a specialist thesis).
I spent six years at Auckland University, and during this time I came to understand the importance of historical linguistics in reconstructing the past, via my colleagues Roger Green and Andrew Pawley. I carried out fieldwork in Polynesia (Figure 1.4), in New Zealand itself from 1967–1970, in the Society and Marquesas Islands in 1967–1968 (with Yoshihiko Sinoto of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu), and in the Cook Islands from 1968–1972. In 1972, I was invited by Professor John Mulvaney to apply for a lectureship in a new Department of Prehistory that he had just founded in The Australian National University in Canberra. I moved there in 1973, and am still there now (but it is now called the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences).

During my time in Auckland a distant relative, Peter Lewin, who worked as a publisher’s agent in London, contacted me. Peter was very helpful because he suggested I apply for contracts to write books for international publishers. By 1978 I had my first two books published – *Man’s Conquest of the Pacific* (Collins, Auckland, and Oxford University Press, New York) and *The Polynesians* (Thames and Hudson, London). During this time, between about 1970 and 1978, I was thinking broadly about the whole prehistory of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, in terms of the archaeology, the biological anthropology, and the comparative linguistics. At that time, comparative linguistics was actually quite far ahead of both archaeology and biological anthropology in its power to interpret Austronesian population history (the modern science of population genetics was only in its infancy then, and had little useful to say on such issues). Because of this, I discovered the tremendous importance of the linguistic population that we today term ‘the Austronesians’, and of the archaeological record that can putatively be associated with their remote ancestors.

Figure 1.4 Peter Bellwood during research at Huahine in the Society Islands, French Polynesia, in 1967.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Q2: We learned from your publications that you have worked on many sites in many countries. Could you tell us how your research focus has changed over the last decades?

Due to my growing interest in Austronesian prehistory, and in the expansion history of Neolithic populations in general, I ceased my Polynesian research in 1972 and moved into Island Southeast Asia, continuing my research over many years in eastern Indonesia (Talaud Islands and northern Moluccas), East Malaysia (Sabah, northern Borneo), and the Batanes Islands (northern Philippines). It was obvious then, as now, that Polynesia was simply the end of the line for ancient Oceanic voyaging, despite its huge extent and the vast distances between islands. The Austronesians had not evolved their foundation of cultural and linguistic characteristics in Polynesia, but far to the west in southern China and Island Southeast Asia (an earlier idea that ancestral Polynesians arrived via the Americas was no longer held seriously by the 1970s). Since 1974, most of my fieldwork has therefore been focused within Southeast Asia.
Many of my students during the period from 1978 onwards also came from Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan, and all carried out valuable fieldwork in these regions (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). Since 2004 my research and fieldwork interests have also moved into Vietnam, but my interests have always remained most strongly focused on the Neolithic. Of course, I have worked on the archaeology of many other periods as well – Palaeolithic in Indonesia, Hoabinhian in Malaysia, Indian contact in Indonesia at ca. 2,000 years ago, Bronze Age in northern Vietnam, ceramic trade in recent prehistory in Island Southeast Asia – but my central interest has always remained the history of early food-producing populations, their economies and their languages.

Today, my research focus has moved into worldwide issues with the first being the expansions of early food-producing populations in all continents, which I discussed in my 2005 book First Farmers. More recently, I have published my book First Migrants (Wiley-Blackwell 2013), which covers the prehistory of human migration everywhere, from African hominins at 2 million years ago to eastern Polynesians at only 800 years ago. I have also edited Global Prehistory of Human Migration for Wiley-Blackwell (2015), a book that contains over 50 chapters by many authors on all aspects of ancient human migration from archaeological, linguistic and genetic perspectives.

Q3: What are some of the more memorable places where you have conducted field research?

My earliest experiences remain most strongly in my mind. These include my first pre-university excavations as a volunteer and site supervisor at Cirencester and Leicester (both Roman cities) in England in 1961–1963; as a volunteer at Herculaneum in Italy in 1963; tracing archaeological remains with my Cambridge contemporary Norman Hammond along a Roman road in Tunisia and Libya in 1964; excavating a tepe in the province of Luristan, western Iran, with Clare Goff in 1966; excavating rock shelters in the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia with Yoshihiko Sinoto in 1967; and then starting my own research projects with my own students in New Zealand and the Cook Islands in 1967 and 1968. In 1974 I carried out my first research in Southeast Asia...
with Indonesian archaeologist I Made Sutayasa in the remote Talaud Islands of northeastern Indonesia, and then commenced a project with David McReady and the Sabah Museum in 1978 in the southeastern rainforests of Sabah, northern Borneo. In 1990 I began another project with Geoffrey Irwin and Gunadi Nithaminoto in the northern Moluccas in Indonesia, and then in the late 1990s, due to growing social unrest in this region, I moved my research interests into the Batanes Islands in the northern Philippines, commencing there with Atholl Anderson and Bong Dizon in 2002. Since 2004 I have been also excavating sites in both northern and southern Vietnam, with Judith Cameron, Marc Oxenham, Philip J. Piper and many Vietnamese colleagues (Figure 1.7).

Since my pre-student days, in 1961, I have taken part in archaeological fieldwork in no less than 20 countries, much of it with graduate students undertaking surveys and excavations for their Master's and PhD projects. I will always remain grateful for all this opportunity, which has shown me how varied are the populations of the world, and how important are the prehistories of everyone, not just of the dominant cultures and conquest civilisations.

Figure 1.7 Peter Bellwood (right) in discussion with Nguyen Kim Dung (left) and Bui Chi Hoang (centre) at Rach Nui, Long An Province, Vietnam, in 2012.
Source: Courtesy of Philip Piper.
In terms of those fieldwork ‘sensations’ that are hard to forget, I will always remember the hard digging down the deepest trenches, the hoping and hoping for something special, the fine sieving, the heat and dust, and conversely the heat and rainforest humidity, and of course the local workers, the graduate students, and the many colleagues and past teachers, some of whom are no longer with us. Naturally, from time to time, discoveries of an immediate material nature came to light – a gold ring down a Roman drain in Leicester, a Dong Son (Iron Age) boat with locked mortise and tenon construction in northern Vietnam, an earring of Taiwan jade in the Batanes Islands, even small pieces of obsidian that travelled more than 3,000 km, more than 3,000 years ago, from the Bismarck Archipelago in Melanesia to the site of Bukit Tengkorak in Sabah (East Malaysia). There are also discoveries of a much deeper nature that have taken lots of analysis and thought to reach, and it is these deeper discoveries that have informed most of my books and articles over the years.

**Q4: What have been some of your most important research findings?**

I think my most important research finding, which I was approaching in the late 1970s and early 1980s, has been that the expansions of major language families have gone hand in hand in many cases with the expansions of early populations of food producers (Neolithic in European terminology, or Formative in the Americas). Colin Renfrew was working on this theme in Cambridge at the same time, but on Indo-European and the European Neolithic, whereas I was considering Austronesian and the Southeast Asian Neolithic. So we were working independently. My Austronesian experience up to the mid-1980s gradually made it clear to me that a linked farming and language explanation was the only conceivable one to explain most of their dispersal, via population growth, but of course with maritime skills contributing as well in this instance. Linked food producer and language family expansion worked not just for Austronesian but for many of the other major agriculturalist language families of the world, although such explanations do not necessarily imply population replacement – a much more gradual process of demic diffusion and population mixing has always been, in my view, far more likely in all regions of the world where farmers have spread, including China. Some of my opponents claim from time to time that I favour a virtual extermination of hunter-gatherers by farmers, but most of them do not read my writings in detail and make blanket assumptions.

In terms of excavation discoveries, I cannot claim to have uncovered any ancient cultures or fossils that have revolutionised understanding of human history. But I think some of my fieldwork has led to new insights into a number of locally significant issues. For instance, my late 1960s excavations of Maori fortifications in New Zealand revealed substantial information about the internal organisation and defences of such sites. The 1990s excavations in the northern Moluccas revealed a 40,000-year-old Palaeolithic culture on one of the migration routes to New Guinea and Australia, and my excavations here and in the Talaud Islands (in 1974) led me to recognise the importance of a very widespread Neolithic tradition of red-slipped pottery, especially in the Philippines and eastern Indonesia. The 2000 BP Dong Xa boat, discovered in northern Vietnam in 2004, revealed possible contacts with the Mediterranean. My work in the Batanes Islands has revealed important data on the early movement of Austronesian-speaking populations between Taiwan and the Philippines. Finally, our current excavations with Vietnamese archaeologists in southern Vietnam are revealing the presence there of peoples growing *japonica* rice (of Yangzi origin, presumably), and keeping pigs and dogs and making fine pottery, commencing about 4,000 years ago. These Vietnam discoveries relate very closely to discoveries made in recent years in central and northeastern Thailand.
Q5: The quality of your book First Farmers was recognised with an award for the best book by the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) in 2005, and this book's success prompted translation into multiple languages (such as Vietnamese and Japanese). Could you please tell us how you developed the idea for this book?

After many years of research on the Austronesians, drawing the conclusion that their expansion had begun with Neolithic populations in southern China and Taiwan, I felt myself drawn into considering other regions of the world. Colin Renfrew in the 1980s was working on the suggestion that speakers of Indo-European languages had entered Europe during the early Neolithic, migrating as farmers from Anatolia. Luca Cavalli-Sforza and Albert Ammerman had also examined the same idea for the European Neolithic from an archaeological and genetic perspective, but without considering the languages. It remained to consider all three areas of research together – languages, genes and archaeology – and when this was done it became ever more clear that the pre-colonial distributions of other major language families, such as Austroasiatic, Afroasiatic, Bantu, Sino-Tibetan, Uto-Aztecan and Iroquoian, could be explained from a similar perspective. Of course, not all language families expanded to great extents, and those that have expanded have not all done so due to early agricultural population growth, but it was never my intention to apply the farming/language hypothesis to all situations. However, it seems to work for many, and in 2003 I was invited by Jared Diamond to join him in preparing a paper on the topic for the journal Science. I also organised a conference on the theme with Colin Renfrew in the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge in 2001.

Q6: Concerning the farming/language dispersal issues in general, what is your current thinking?

Early on in my research, I perhaps tended to assume that farming dispersal began very soon after the initial shift from hunting and gathering to farming in many parts of the world. But new work is showing that the development of full agriculture with domesticated crops and animals took several millennia to advance from the early phases of cultivating wild plants and taming of wild animals. In the Middle East, China and Mesoamerica, these developments took perhaps 3,000 years – for instance, from Natufian to the end of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B in the Levant and Anatolia, or from Shangshan to the Songze culture in the lower Yangzi Basin in China. This means that the very first ‘farmers’, however we might wish to define them in economic terms, did not commence the major migrations. They began later when large populations were already dependent on food production, and became more intensive as these populations began to impact heavily on their home environments, encouraging them to look for new resources and land elsewhere, especially in terrain only hitherto occupied by hunters and gatherers. I feel that current results from archaeology, genetics and comparative linguistics are supporting this farming/language viewpoint very strongly, especially for highly significant regions of early farming such as the Middle East, northern Sub-Saharan Africa, China, Mesoamerica, and the central Andes and Amazonia. The farming/language dispersal viewpoint has many enemies, but I rarely find their arguments well informed or watertight. More often they seem to reflect a natural tendency to avoid using migration as an explanation for any significant patterning in human prehistory, except for the presumed migration that brought modern humans out of Africa in the first place.

My views have also changed over the years on the degree to which indigenous populations contributed genes and even perhaps some cultural knowledge to incoming populations of farmers. I find it hard to accept that indigenous foraging populations would ever have adopted farming unless substantial numbers of farmers had already entered their territory. But we have many cases – I called them ‘friction zones’ in my First Farmers – in which the incoming farming populations did not enjoy any very significant demographic advantages over the indigenous foragers. Such situations might initially have developed in regions where farming was rather
marginal for various climatic or other environmental reasons, but the fact remains that large populations of mainly indigenous forager ancestry could have adopted farming in such areas, increased their populations, and begun their own expansions.

I think the greatest significance of the farming/language model for Neolithic expansion is that it can explain the pre-colonial racial distributions of mankind so very clearly. By ‘racial’ I refer only to phenotypic surface characters, which vary with latitude and geography. No one believes any more that races are fixed and clearly bounded entities, and all intergrade as a result of the enormous number of human movements that have occurred in both prehistory and history. But, even so, clear racial differences do exist between populations such as Africans, Europeans, Asians, Australians and Melanesians. These differences in skin colour and hair form undoubtedly evolved initially in the Paleolithic, after modern humans spread from Africa, but they have not remained fossilised in distribution according to the pattern that might have existed 30,000 years ago. Instead, the modern distributions of Africans south of the Sahara, Eurasians north of the Sahara and in western and central Eurasia, and Asians in East and Southeast Asia, in my view, reflect very greatly the expansions that occurred during the Neolithic. The Americas were of course settled long before farming developed, but farming expansions occurred there too, as in Melanesia and New Guinea.

Q7: Specifically concerning the topic of Austronesian origins and dispersals, what is your current thinking?

The ancestors of the Austronesian-speaking people clearly migrated from some homeland region right across the Pacific in ancient times, taking their genes, languages, material culture and food-producing economies with them. I could never agree with the idea that languages simply moved without human migration, and still do not now, even though I find many of my colleagues are rather eager to adopt this most unrealistic scenario. ‘Language shift’, as linguists call it when people abandon their own native language and adopt an incoming one, has always been a localised process in human affairs, although colonial states have certainly increased its significance in the past 500 years. But language shift alone does not explain the distributions of major language families such as Austronesian. The early Austronesians were real people, undergoing real canoe-borne migrations into the Pacific. But from where, when, and in which directions? In 1978, when I wrote Man’s Conquest of the Pacific, the answers to these questions were not as clear as they are now, and while I still agree with most of what I published at that time, I have developed my thoughts greatly in subsequent years on the deeper prehistory of the Austronesians, and indeed of humanity in general. The geographical region known as ‘China’ now bulks much larger in my thinking about Southeast Asia and the Pacific than it did in 1978, and this is attributable to the developments alluded to in the previous sections, especially amongst the Neolithic populations of the Yangzi Basin and southern China.

But the early Austronesians were not ‘Chinese’ – they did not speak Sinitic languages or have any obvious direct connections with the roots of Chinese culture in the Yellow River Valley (although I should add here that linguist Laurent Sagart believes there were such connections during the Neolithic, and to me this possibility is extremely interesting). Before 2,500–2,000 years ago, China was a kaleidoscope of many very diversified Neolithic (and some Bronze Age) populations, many of whom have descendants in Southeast Asia and Oceania nowadays, and of whom many were ultimately to be incorporated into the expanding Chinese cultural world. Linguists today refer to these populations of Southeast Asia and Oceania as Tai, Austroasiatic, Austronesian and Tibeto-Burman – all can, to some degree, be traced to origins in southern China, allowing for the obvious factor of intermixing with native populations in all regions.
As far as the early Austronesians are concerned, my opinion over many years has been that their Pre-Austronesian ancestors moved as Neolithic and probably rice- and millet-cultivating populations from Fujian to Taiwan between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago. In Taiwan, they developed what linguists reconstruct today as ‘Proto-Austronesian’ (no Austronesian speakers ever inhabited southern China according to linguistic records, but Pre-Austronesian ones obviously did), and honed their coastal economies for more than a millennium before moving on into the Batanes Islands and the northern Philippines at about 4,000 years ago, carrying with them traditions of making red-slipped pottery, ornaments of Taiwan (Fengtian) jade, polished and sometimes stepped stone adzes, domesticated crops, pigs and dogs, and of course a well-developed maritime tradition of fishing and canoe construction, using sails. The prehistory of the Austronesian world is far too complex to summarise here, but it is important to remember that it took more than 3,000 years for colonists to spread gradually, from island to island, until they finally reached New Zealand around AD 1250, via the islands of central and eastern Polynesia. As I have stated, I do not agree with some current views that Austronesian languages spread through Island Southeast Asia without human migration, and I regard food production as being just as important as maritime knowledge in fuelling the expansion. Naturally, early colonists found many wild resources in previously uninhabited islands, especially sea mammals and birds, so amongst these early colonists we can expect the importance of agriculture to have declined a little, and temporarily, as we see in early Maori (‘Moa-Hunter’) New Zealand. But this does not negate the overall significance of food production, without which many small Oceanic islands would not have been habitable by humans over the long term.

Q8: In the past two years, you have published two books about ancient human migrations (First Migrants and The Global Prehistory of Human Migration, both with Wiley-Blackwell). As we know, migration is always a major theme in your research. However, as you have mentioned, ‘when I was a student of archaeology in the 1960s, migration was becoming an uncomfortable concept for many archaeologists, and home-grown independence or multiregionalism was becoming the favoured perspective on the past in both human evolution and archaeology’. In fact, I myself encountered a similar feeling from many other archaeologists when I was a PhD student (in 2004–2008). Nonetheless, it seems that since 2010, the issue of migration in archaeology has become popular again. How do you see these waves and changes in thinking in the discipline, and what do you propose that archaeology can contribute to this topic?

In my First Migrants I examine all major episodes of human migration from early hominin movements out of Africa to the spreads of modern humans and later on of food producers, in all regions of the world. I see migration as one of the most significant aspects of human behaviour, one which can spread new forms of human biology and culture over vast distances and thus allow the forces of mutation, selection and drift that drive evolution to work on new canvases. Migration as an event has waxed and waned in significance over the millennia, and it was certainly more important during certain transitions in human history than in others. Migration as a concept within archaeology has also waxed and waned in its perceived significance. This might be a reflection of the simplistic way in which the concept was used on some occasions in the past to explain trivial changes in the archaeological record, and there is an undoubted level of guilt amongst educated people in the world today about human rights and the oppression of colonised populations during the colonial era. But, regardless of what might be contained within the archaeological record, I think it is imperative that modern archaeologists be aware of debates within other disciplines, such as linguistics, within which the issue of whether language families spread through migration of speakers or through ‘elite dominance’ is often of great significance (my answers usually favour migration of speakers, for reasons that I discuss in my book First Migrants).
More to the point, however, are the current remarkable developments in human genetics and the extraction of ancient DNA from bones. Geneticists can now survey whole human genomes in terms of the polymorphic nucleotide positions that reveal their deep ancestries and histories of admixture. I have just attended (January 2015) a genetics conference at Harvard University where the power of these new techniques has exposed a migration from the Russian steppes into central Europe about 4,500 years ago (Laziridis et al. 2014 provide preliminary data), a migration that I would associate with the spread of the Baltic- and Slavic-linguistic populations within the Indo-European language family. In many ways, it may be no longer relevant in such cases if some archaeologists wish to deny that a migration occurred since the genetic evidence is so clear and incontrovertible, as it is in the case of another recent analysis in which the very high importance of a Formosan ancestry component in the genomes of modern Austronesian language speakers has been clearly demonstrated (Lipson et al. 2014). Of course, archaeology still holds the power to provide a definite chronology and to illuminate the cultural contexts that allowed such migrations to occur, but it is time for all archaeologists to acknowledge the significance of multidisciplinary approaches and to cease burying themselves myopically in their own data sets.

Q9: In your research career, you received continued accolades from your colleagues, but sometimes you also faced criticism. How did you handle those criticisms, especially those that you might have regarded as unfair at the time?

Criticisms are important for all of us, and I hold the view that if one receives no criticism then no one is reading one's published work. Citations are important to me, and citations often reflect the intensity of discussion about a given topic, and by definition the existence of criticism. However, I become resentful when the criticism is couched in *ad hominem* and sometimes mildly insulting terminology – I hardly need to give examples! The late Roger Green, a Pacific archaeologist I much admired, once said to me that critics often fail because ‘they haven’t done their homework’ (Figure 1.8). He was right – doing homework is an endless and greatly time-consuming task, especially if one is trying to keep up with the new electronic literature in more than one discipline. Of course, criticism if one is actually wrong is another matter, but I enjoy well-informed criticism and try to modify my views whenever I feel it is truly necessary. When I receive criticism that I consider unfair or poorly informed, I reply immediately in print and try to keep my temper under control.

Figure 1.8 Peter Bellwood (left) at the 14th Congress of the Indo-Pacific Association in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 1990 with Roger Green (centre) and R.P. Soejono (right).

Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Q10: In your opinion, what are some of the more interesting challenges facing Southeast Asian and Pacific archaeology research today and in the near future?

The most important historical and population questions will always revolve around issues such as the timing of modern human arrival, the timing and directions of the main agriculturalist expansions, and the nature of the later religious and trading contacts with external civilisations, such as those of India and China, after about 2,500 years ago. As far as modern human origins in the region are concerned, archaeologists face the problem that the normally accepted ‘markers’ of modern humanity, such as blade tools, projectile points and use of ochre are rare to absent [in Southeast Asia] in the period of time termed ‘the Upper Palaeolithic’, although new dating of rock art in Sulawesi to about 40,000 years ago must surely alter our perspectives a little (Aubert et al. 2014). Nevertheless, modern human behaviour in the Java Palaeolithic in Indonesia is not clearly distinguishable from the archaic human behaviour of Homo erectus in terms of the lithics that survive for archaeological inspection. Indeed, it is now becoming clearer in the western Old World generally that modern and archaic human behaviours cannot always be distinguished from each other, even in Africa. This means, of course, that archaeologists cannot interpret questions of modern human migration without paying serious attention to the results from biological anthropology and ancient DNA in bone.

Likewise, understanding of Neolithic developments nowadays can only proceed with attention to fields of research parallel to archaeology, such as comparative linguistics, and again the biological aspects. The days have long gone when archaeologists can assert that only they can study the past directly, and those who continue to assert this will soon find their works ignored by the growing torrent of research in ancient DNA, palaeoanthropology, and linguistic reconstruction.

There is another very important challenge, which I discover frequently whenever I have organised conferences of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association. There is a kind of ‘tyranny of language’ in archaeological scholarship, in that all of us must from time to time deal with archaeological reports from countries whose published internal literature is often beyond our direct reading ability. Busy archaeologists cannot be expected to be fluent in several languages, although some certainly try to be, and it is not fair to expect everyone to have to learn English, or any other major language such as Mandarin, just so that they can read archaeological reports. In my view, the main long-term solution to this problem will come with more efficient methods of computer translation from one language to another. Fortunate students can often improve their foreign language skills by studying abroad, but this option is not open to everyone, and I know that many people who choose to study in a foreign country will often find it hard to enter the job queue in their home country, and can even be actively excluded from following a career at home.

There are no simple answers to these problems, but one way to improve the access of local scholars to worldwide knowledge is to organise research projects with international personnel.

Q11: Nowadays, it seems that many archaeologists are becoming increasingly specialised, although we always need to be aware of general knowledge. What is your advice for students who want to balance specialisation with a general approach? What is your advice for students who wish to engage in long-term archaeological research and seek a career in archaeology?

The best way to maintain a broad generalised approach to any research field is to teach it to undergraduates since the material has to be put into summary form and statements must be made as to its overall significance. Specialisation is essential if research is to proceed, but not at the expense of a broad and balanced perspective. Archaeologists have long argued over the merits and demerits of ‘bottom up’ approaches derived from actual field data, versus ‘top down’ approaches based on the testing of broad hypotheses derived from comparative and multidisciplinary research. I suggest both approaches be followed, not just one at the expense of the other, even though much of my own research has been top down in this regard.
The best way to become involved in long-term archaeological research is to join a large cooperative research project that has funding for several years and that can support postdoctoral researchers (having a PhD first is essential nowadays for a research career in archaeology or any other science). Many students do this through their PhD supervisors, and in Australia the funds come from the Australian Research Council (or the National Science Foundation in the USA). However, my experience in this regard is based in Australia, where virtually all significant archaeological research is undertaken by universities. In many countries, government-funded research institutes play this role and provide funding – for instance, the Institute of Archaeology in Beijing and the many provincial institutes in China; Academia Sinica in Taipei; the National Museum in Manila; and the Thai Fine Arts Department in Bangkok. But I would presume that the same advice still holds – join a large project and try to develop a specialisation that will place your skills in demand!

Q12: What other research topics would you like to address in the future, and do you have plans for upcoming field projects?

In 2014, with my colleagues Hsiao-chun Hung, Philip J. Piper and Mike Carson, I received another three-year grant from the Australian Research Council to continue our project on the Neolithic of Southeast Asia. We have excavations planned at the site of Thach Lac in Ha Tinh Province in north-central Vietnam, in eastern Taiwan, in the Cagayan Valley in the northern Philippines, and in the Mariana Islands, in each case excavating sites that give evidence for the earliest developments of Neolithic cultures. Our aim is to examine the widespread occurrence of Neolithic cultures in the centuries around 2000 BC from the perspectives of their material cultures and economies, especially seeking evidence for food production through animal domestication and through archeobotany, the latter in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology in London. Our plans are to continue with this research into 2017, after which I will probably have retired to something a little less strenuous (Figure 1.9)!

Figure 1.9 Peter Bellwood at Fuzhou, China, in 2010 with wife Claudia Morris.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
1. Professor Peter Bellwood’s Ongoing Journey in Archaeology

References


Major field projects undertaken during Peter’s professional career, 1967–2013


1967–1968 Society and Marquesas Islands (with Y. Sinoto) – 5 months survey and excavation.

1968 Otakanini pa, New Zealand – excavation.


1974 Talaud Islands and Minahasa region, Northern Sulawesi, Indonesia – survey and excavation (with Dr I.M. Sutayasa).

1977–1978 Brunei (with Mr Matussin bin Omar) – 2 months excavation.

1979 Gua Cha, Kelantan, West Malaysia (with Adi Haji Taha) – excavation.

1984 Reconnaissance in the Sanjai valley, Bihar, India, with A.K. Ghosh and staff of the Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta.

1980–1987 Sabah, Malaysia – 8 months of fieldwork and excavation.

1989 Sarawak (with Ipoi Datan) – excavation.

1990, 1994, 1995–1996 Halmahera, Morotai, Gebe and Kayoa islands, northern Maluku, Indonesia-survey and excavations, with G.J. Irwin of Auckland University, Indonesian archaeologists from Yogyakarta (Universitas Gadjah Mada, DPP Sejarah Purbakala and Balai Arkeologi) and two graduate students (Mahirta and Daud Tanudirjo, MA and PhD respectively).

1994 The caves of Gua Bukit Chawas and Gua Peraling, Kelantan, Malaysia – fieldwork, with Adi Haji Taha.


2004 Excavation at Dong Xa and Yen Bac, northern Vietnam (with Judith Cameron, Nguyen Viet and Bui Van Liem).

2009 November: excavation in the Neolithic site of Nagsabaran, Cagayan Valley, Philippines, with Hsiao-chun Hung, Marc Oxenham and Eusebio Dizon.


2012 May: Excavations at Sembiran and Pacung, northern Bali, with Ambra Calo.


2013 November: Excavation of Diang Balu cave in the headwaters of the Kapuas River (interior Borneo) with Vida Kusmartono.

Although Peter retired in 2013, he has continued field research in the Asia-Pacific region. For instance, he was part of the Loc Giang excavation in southern Vietnam during March–April 2014, and then he participated in the excavations at Ru Diep and Thach Lac in central Vietnam with Philip J. Piper and Lam Thi My Dung during April–May 2015. More recently, during October 2016, he was in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, western Micronesia with Mike Carson and Hsiao-chun Hung for excavations at the Bapot Site, where he discovered a beautiful shell ornament linked with previous findings in Southeast Asia.

Publications by Peter Bellwood (until July 2016)

These are classified under the following headings: A. Books and monographs; B. Edited volumes; C. Singled-authored journal articles; D. Singled-authored chapters in edited books; E. Jointly written articles in journals and edited books; F. Book reviews, letters to editors and other minor contributions.

A. Books and monographs


1. Professor Peter Bellwood’s Ongoing Journey in Archaeology


B. Edited volumes

1. *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association*. Peter Bellwood was the main editor for every issue of this journal between 1982 (volume 3) and 2009 (volume 29).


5. 1995. *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Peter Bellwood, James Fox and Darrell Tryon. Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU.


C. Single-authored journal articles


61. 1999. (Who were the statue carvers of Easter Island?). Text and illustrations for two double-page spreads in the Japanese graphic science magazine *Newton* vol. 19 no. 3, pp. 68–71 (in Japanese).


1. Professor Peter Bellwood’s Ongoing Journey in Archaeology


D. Single-authored chapters in edited books


82. 2015. Vietnam’s place in the prehistory of Eastern Asia – a multidisciplinary perspective on the Neolithic / Vị trí của Việt Nam trong tiến sự Đông Á – một hướng tiếp cận đa ngành về thời kỳ đó đã mới. In A. Reinecke (ed.), Perspectives on the Archaeology of Vietnam, pp. 47–70. Published in Bonn by the LWL-Museum for Archaeology, Herne, the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums in Mannheim, the State Museum of Archaeology of Chemnitz, and the German Archaeological Institute (in English and Vietnamese).


E. Jointly written articles in journals and edited books


*Antiquity* 247: 221–232.
10. 1991. Ardika, I.W. and P. Bellwood. Recent research at Gua Sireh (Serian) and Lubang Angin
(Gunung Mulu National Park), Sarawak. *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Assn*
10: 386–405. This paper was later reprinted in *Sarawak Museum Journal* 44 (n.s. 65),
in the northern Moluccas; interim results, 1991 field season. *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific
Prehistory Association* 13: 20–33.
Burenhult (ed.), *People of the Stone Age (The Illustrated History of Humankind, vol. 2)*,
Geographical Society.
and diverse transformations. In P. Bellwood, J. Fox and D. Tryon (eds), *The Austronesian:
Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, pp. 1–16. Canberra, Dept. Anthropology RSPAS,
ANU.
Fossil marsupials (Macropodidae, Peroryctidae) and other mammals of Holocene age from
S. Balasubramanian. Mammals from Holocene archaeological deposits on Gebe and
years of prehistory in the northern Moluccas. In G.-J. Bartstra (ed.), *Bird’s Head Approaches,
Prehistoric relations between Island Southeast Asia and Oceania: recent archaeological
investigations in the Northern Moluccas. In J-C. Galipaud and I. Lilley (eds), *The Pacific
The Northern Moluccas as a crossroads between Indonesia and the Pacific. In Sudaryanto


**F. Book reviews, letters to editors and other minor contributions**


Conferences organised by Peter Bellwood (Peter retired from conference organisation in 2009)

1975 ANZAAS (Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science), Canberra. Secretary of Section 25A (Archaeology).


MA, MPhil and PhD students supervised by Peter Bellwood (as chair of the supervisory panel) and their research topics

**Matussin bin Omar (Brunei)**
MA 1978, Archaeological Excavations in Protohistoric Brunei.

**Adi bin Haji Taha (Malaysia)**
PhD 2000, Archaeological Investigations in Ulu Kelantan, Peninsular Malaysia.

**I. Wayan Ardika (Indonesia)**

**Somsuda Rutnin (Thailand)**

**Dianne Tillotson (Australia)**

**Ida Ayu Mediani (Indonesia)**
MA 1989, Wet-Rice Cultivation in Bali: The Continuity of Technology and Social Organisation from the 9th Century to the Present.

**Ipoi Datan (Malaysia)**
MA 1990, Archaeological Excavations at Gua Sireh (Serian) and Lubang Angin (Gunung Mulu National Park), Sarawak, Malaysia.

**Karina Arifin (Indonesia)**
PhD 2004, Early Human Occupation of the East Kalimantan Rainforest (the Upper Birang River Region, Berau).

**Daud Tanudirjo (Indonesia)**
PhD 2001, Islands in Between: Prehistory of the Northeastern Indonesian Archipelago.

**Francis David Bulbeck (Australia)**
PhD 1992, A Tale of Two Kingdoms: The Historical Archaeology of Gowa and Tallok, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

**Widya Nayati (Indonesia)**
Mark Hudson (UK)

Mahirta (Indonesia)
MA 1997, The Development of the Mare Pottery Tradition in the Northern Moluccas.
PhD 2005, Human Occupation on Rote and Sawu Island, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia.

Tracey Lie Dan Lu (China)

Anggraeni (Indonesia)
PhD 2012, The Austronesian Migration Hypothesis as Seen from Prehistoric Settlements on the Karama River, Mamuju, West Sulawesi.

Djoko Nugroho Witjaksono (Indonesia)

David G. Campbell (Australia)

Judith Cameron (Australia)
PhD 2002, Textile Technology in the Prehistory of Southeast Asia.

Andrew Barram (Australia)
MA 2004, Dating ‘Dvaravati’.

Mimi Savitri (Indonesia)

Shawna Yang (Taiwan)
MA 2006, Fishing Sinkers in the Batanes Islands (Philippines) and Taiwan, and Further Relationships with East Asia.

Armand Salvador B Mijares (Philippines)

Michael Tracey (Australia)

Hsiao-chun Hung (Taiwan)
PhD 2008, Migration and Cultural Interaction in Southern Coastal China, Taiwan and the Northern Philippines, 3000 BC to AD 100: The Early History of the Austronesian-Speaking Populations.
Po-yi Chiang (Taiwan)
MPhil 2008, Han Cultural and Political Influences in the Transformation of the Shizhaishan Cultural Complex.
PhD 2015, Pottery Production and Social Complexity on the Chengdu Plain, Sichuan, China, 2500 to 800 BC.

Mandy Mottram (Australia)
PhD 2010, Continuity versus Cultural Markers: Results of the Controlled Surface Collection of Tell Halula, North Syria.

Carmen Sarjeant (New Zealand)

Nicholas Skopal (Australia)
MA 2015, Explaining Harappan Fortifications (Pakistan and India).

Vida Pervaya Rusianti Kusmartono (Indonesia)

Chris Carter (Australia)

Appendix

Figure 1.10 Peter Bellwood on a 1965 medieval excavation at Grafton Regis, Northamptonshire, England.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Figure 1.11 Peter Bellwood in 1975 at Rano Raraku, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Chile.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Figure 1.12 Peter Bellwood in 1982 at Tingkayu, Sabah, Malaysia.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.

Figure 1.13 Peter Bellwood in 1985 at the International Conference on Anthropological Studies of the Taiwan Area, National Taiwan University, Taipei (with K.C. Chang and Wen-hsun Sung).
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Figure 1.14 Peter Bellwood in 1986 at Londa village, Tana Toraja, Sulawesi, Indonesia.
Source: Courtesy of Peter Bellwood.
Figure 1.15 Peter Bellwood (seated right) at Nagsabaran, northern Luzon, Philippines, in 2009; Standing (left to right) Jonathan de Asis, Marc Oxenham and Eusebio Dizon; Seated (left to right) Mary Jane Louise A. Bolunia (Owis), Tony Peñarosa, Yi-lin Elaine Chen, Philip Piper, Hirofumi Matsumura, Juliet Meyer, Anna Willis, Hsiao-chun Hung and Peter Bellwood.
Source: Courtesy of Hsiao-chun Hung.

Figure 1.16 Peter Bellwood with Truman Simanjuntak in Peter’s office at ANU in 2013.
Source: Courtesy of Truman Simanjuntak.
Figure 1.17 Siem Reap Cambodia IPPA (Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association) Congress Symposium ‘Human dispersals and interactions in Asia and Oceania’, 2014; front left to right: Emiri Miyama, Mariko Yamagata, Ian Glover, Peter Bellwood, Naruya Saitou; rear left to right: Ken-ichi Shinoda, Hirofumi Matsumura, Hsiao-chun Hung, Michiko Intoh, Sofwan Noerwidi.

Source: Courtesy of Hirofumi Matsumura.
This text is taken from *New Perspectives in Southeast Asian and Pacific Prehistory*, edited by Philip J. Piper, Hirofumi Matsumura and David Bulbeck, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.