

a staggered appearance as in a brick wall. A similar application is found in a basket from Fraser Island, Queensland, and to a slight extent in a specimen from Framlingham, Victoria, in which the motive apparently is an æsthetic one. A variant application in which the supplementary working strand is taken around three coils at a time has been recorded from Swan Reach, South Australia. In the latter the bindings were not staggered, with the result that the pattern has a banded appearance.¹

If we may judge from the few specimens available, it would seem that the use of a second series of binding elements was known throughout most of south-eastern Australia, although it apparently was not characteristic of any area. Such supplementary binders greatly strengthen the baskets, and in the many possibilities for variant applications present numerous opportunities for the development of pleasing and striking patterns. However, in so far as our few data indicate, it appears that the aborigines seldom took advantage of these opportunities, for most baskets show no variation from the fundamental half-hitch technique of construction. It is only in a few specimens that variant applications have been noted, but since certain of these variants are found in widely separated localities, it appears that they were recognized as distinctive varieties, and as such were being perpetuated.

It thus seems apparent that technical factors are of primary importance as an influence upon the development of the simple design patterns on Australian coiled baskets. The aborigine who might wish to achieve a new design, if there is conscious effort in this respect, would need to do no more than alter the technique of construction, and if this were followed consistently a specific geometrical pattern which could not have been foreseen would automatically follow. The few variations noticeable seem to indicate that there have not been many attempts to alter either the shapes of the baskets or the technique of construction. As elsewhere in the world, motor habits in technical processes appear to have exercised strong conservative influences. It will be interesting to see whether additional variations will come to light when a greater number of baskets have been adequately studied.

D. S. DAVIDSON.

Australia: General.

Enright.

Notes on the Aborigines of the North Coast of New South Wales. By W. J. Enright, B.A.¹

I. CEREMONIAL OBJECTS.

In the year 1935 I received from Michael Griffin, of Coff's Harbour, a number of stone artefacts of the aborigines. Three of them he called "totem stones".

I showed them to a Worimi Karadjí at Purfleet last year (1936), and he stated that one of them, a piece of white quartz of spherical shape $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, was used by medicine men, but the other two, which appear in the accompanying photograph, were unknown to him. The following day I was at Nulla Nulla, near Bellbrook, on the Macleay River, where I met seven initiates who still assist in carrying out the initiation ceremonies called Murrawan, Dalghai and Kiparra. Apart from Professor A. P. Elkin, no one else was present but a little girl no more than seven years of age. On opening my bag containing the two stones, the aboriginals immediately stood shoulder to shoulder, forming a wall screening the objects from the view of the little girl. That convinced me that the stones were sacred.

The smaller one, I was informed, was shown to the youths who had been through the ceremony of the Kiparra, and they were told that at one time there was no moon and a great boomerang thrower threw his boomerang into the sky, where it remained and was thereafter the moon. The stone illustrated the story. One of the men recognized

¹ The three specimens referred to are figured in D. S. Davidson, "Australian Netting and Basketry Techniques", *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 42, No. 4.

the stone and said it came from Bowra. As that place is near Coff's Harbour, his statement was probably correct. The other stone told the story of the brown snake, but he could not remember it. I have described² the Kiparra system of initiation, but I have never previously heard of stone symbols being used to illustrate the instruction given to the youths.

Matthews described³ the Burbung ceremony of the New England (N.S.W.) tribes whose country adjoined that of the North Coast (N.S.W.) tribes, but he never mentioned this practice. It is quite clear that those who have written of initiation ceremonies in eastern N.S.W. believed that the ceremony ended with the painting of the boys with the red and white stripes crossing each other to form squares, and the extinction of the two fires.

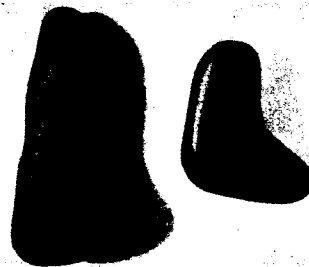


Fig. 1.

Another stone symbol used in secret work has since been discovered, and I learned also of a piece of carved wood used likewise, which is now circulating amongst the coastal natives.

In describing⁴ portion of the material culture of Port Stephens natives, I referred to Fig. 3 of Plate IV as a boomerang, and Fig. 14, Plate III, as a whetstone for sharpening shell fish hooks. I now find that that statement was erroneous. I received all the articles described some months before I met "Tony", the head man of the Garewagal section of the Worimi, and evidently my language did not convey to his mind a sufficiently clear description of the article I was speaking of. Those articles are used in the final teaching, and Professor Elkin, in dealing with another phase of native life, will describe their use.

II. STONE CIRCLES.

Professor W. J. Perry⁵ comments on the apparent absence of stone circles from Australia. I have previously mentioned their discovery by Surveyor H. O. S. White in the Nandewar Ranges, and that Commissioner Fry had seen them in the Paterson River district.

A Karadjí of the Worimi tribe informed me that he saw a stone circle at the ruddle ground near No. 1 Station, which lies between Nowendoc and Gloucester (N.S.W.).

¹ This article forms the first of a series of records made by the author during his long association with the North Coast tribes.

² *Journal of the Royal Society of N.S.W.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 115.

³ *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, Vol. IX, p. 120.

⁴ *Journal of the Royal Society of N.S.W.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 103.

⁵ Perry, W. J.: "Children of the Sun", London, 1928.

The ruddle ground is the place where the natives paint themselves with red ochre during the Kiparra ceremony. None of the aborigines knew its history, and it was believed to be very ancient. He said it was neither a Kiparra nor a Karadji circle.

J.N., a Kumbangerai tribesman, informed me that on a mountain near Gleniffer he found a stone circle with a little heap of stones in the middle. He and his companions pulled out the stones and found a big white stone under them. He went back on a later occasion but could not find it, and believed it had disappeared, but he could not give a reason for that. The circle was not a Kiparra ring. He thought the natives painted themselves at the ring with the cinnabar obtainable near there.

Another stone circle is referred to in the myths of the north coast.

III. BURIAL OF A DARKINUNG.

The Darkinung tribe made contact with the Kamilaroi near Singleton, and their territory extended to and down the valley of the McDonald River. Mr. Alfred Eather, of Bulga, informed me that his mother witnessed the burial of a woman of that tribe in her childhood days. The body was trussed up with knees near the head, and carried on a sheet of bark from the place of death. The body was swaying about whilst being carried, and his mother raised her hands with the intention of preventing the body from falling, when the aborigines immediately showed a feeling of horror. Possibly they were expecting the body, by its movement, to indicate the direction from which the enemy that caused the death came or was situated. Arriving at the place of burial the body was placed on the ground and the earth was piled on it in the form of a mound with the aid of the boomerangs. This is the first time I have heard of that type of burial in the coastal (N.S.W.) district, although Sir Thomas Mitchell found mound graves in western New South Wales.

IV. A WORIMI INCREASE CEREMONY.

When any woman of the Worimi tribe residing about Port Stephens, New South Wales, desired to have a child, she would go to a big fresh-water hole near Sandy Point; there she would express her wish to have a child, and then completely immerse herself in water. No further rites were performed.

V. MYTHS OF NORTH COAST (N.S.W.).

A member of Danghetti tribe, Thomas Drew, who died recently, told me that the parents of the Creator were native companions, and that He was killed at Arakoon by men of the Ngeunbah tribe; three days later He rose from the dead, when the men who killed Him were turned into tea-trees, which may be seen there still. He had a name which can only be mentioned in a secret meeting. Later He will be given another name. It was from Him that all the laws of the Kiparra were received.

J.N., a member of the Kumbangerai tribe, told me that in that neighbourhood above referred to is a ring of stones, and in it there is a grave. Later he explained that what he called a grave is a stone about six feet long laid in the earth. He knew nothing of its origin, but said he was told by his grandfather and father that Goolumbra was buried there.

From J.N. I also heard the following: Long ago his people had a big camp up Orara way, and the moon had a lot of sores on him. He could not walk, and had to be carried. Only those with grass and tree totems carried him. They took him to Coff's Harbour, where they pitched camp and laid him down. He was apparently dying, but decided to have a swim, in expectation of benefiting by it. He said to Grass Tree: "You will live for ever", and ever since, if you burn grass it will come up as a tree. He died and was buried on the island near Coff's Harbour.

VI. THE YERRE-WAHOO.

Matthews* relates a legend current amongst the natives of the south-east coast of New South Wales concerning a creature called the Yaruma. According to them it was a creature closely resembling man, but of greater stature, and having hair all over the body. J.N., a Kumbangerai, told me that big hairy men lived in the scrub at Nana Glen (North Coast, N.S.W.), and were called by the natives Jarrā-wahu. On one occasion a kūrī (aboriginal man) who found a turkey's nest made a fire to cook the eggs. Whilst he was cooking them a Jarrā-wahu arrived, and as the kūrī turned one, the Jarrā-wahu turned another. The kūrī, becoming angered at this, spat at the Jarrā-wahu, who, returning the compliment, was struck on the leg with a tomahawk. As he was struck he cried out "Koin", which brought up his companions. They charged the kūrī and, to impede his retreat, threw a fog in front of him, but he escaped. The Jarrā-wahu were never known to come out of the scrub, but the Karadjis, whom the Kumbangerai called Nallingerra, used to hunt and kill them. The Jarrā-wahu killed the kūrī when they caught them.

A Crown Lands Surveyor, S., informed me that he lived as a boy in the Mudgee district, where a scrubby place was reputed to be the abode of a "Yahu", and a resident in the Maitland district told me a "Yahu" was reputed to live in a thick scrub there. Each said he was a big hairy man.

What is the foundation of these legends can now only be a matter of conjecture. I did get reliable evidence of a tribe of aborigines who lived in the brushes on the Manning River who practised cannibalism. They were driven there by the Worimi, who called them "man-eaters". Some similar circumstances in the distant past may have given rise to the story and, as time went on, the fearsome qualities and appearance of the outcasts were exaggerated and the legend gives us now a creature which is described only as it exists in the imagination of the fearful.

VII. AN ABORIGINAL GRINDING STONE.

I recently received an aboriginal grinding stone from Mr. A. Eather, of Bulga. It was found on the bank of the creek at Milgarra, near Bunnan (N.S.W.). It is of basalt, and is thirteen inches in length, four inches wide at one end and eight inches at the other. The thickness varies from half an inch to two and a quarter inches. It is flat on each side, but one side is worn smooth from constant rubbing. The upper stone is about eight ounces in weight, and is a water-worn basalt pebble. It is worn flat by use on one side only. It was used for grinding seeds, including those of the Kurrajong (*Stereulia acerifolia*), and is the first I have seen from eastern New South Wales.

Mr. Eather informed me that he has found grinders at Bulga, but they were smaller, of different material, and concave. I have not had an opportunity of seeing one, and it might be that the material was softer and by use the cavity would be produced. These upper and lower stones from Milgarra are so worn as to suggest that the seeds were reduced by a rubbing.

W. J. ENRIGHT.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES: PROCEEDINGS

Aboriginal Rock Carvings, Wollombi District, N.S.W. Summary of two lectures delivered before the Society by Mr. R. H. Goddard and Mr. F. Slater on 16th February, 1937.

Mr. Goddard described the expedition which set out in August, 1935, to search for a hitherto unknown aboriginal ceremonial site lying at Burragarra. After a rather arduous climb through almost virgin bush, a series of carved emu pads was found leading northwards. Further up the mountain ridges two portholes were noticed, together with a series of grinding grooves. When at length the *burragarra*, or devil's rock,

* Matthews, W. J.: "Notes on the Aborigines of New South Wales", Sydney, 1907.