

Aborigines 'unaware' of area's ancient treasures

THE relics of pre-European settlement around Glenrock Lagoon are so rich that Aboriginal groups could try to claim the area as sacred, according to a local historian.

Mr John Grothen believes Newcastle Aborigines were unaware of the wealth of treasures in the area which reflected the history and culture of the Awabakal tribe.

At the launching yesterday of his book *The History in and About Glenrock Lagoon*, Mr Grothen said that rare artefacts had been found in the area and only he and handful of others knew the location of a sacred cave near the lagoon.

The cave had been referred to in a letter written last century by explorer Ludwig Leichhardt.

Leichhardt had been shown the cave by the Aborigines living in the area at the time and wrote that it was filled with paintings.

According to Mr Grothen,

nearly all the art was religious in intent and was not intended to be permanent since the immediate religious purpose was important and so little sign of the paintings was left.

Mr Grothen's book also deals with the rich mining history of the area, the establishment of a convict settlement in Glenrock and the changing natural environment of Glenrock Lagoon.

He first visited the area at the age of five in the 1940s.

Since then he has returned many times and in the 1970s began to become interested in recording the history of the area.

Mr Grothen said few people realised how rich the area was in both European and Aboriginal history.

He had put years of research into the preparation of his book so the historical importance of the area to Newcastle was never forgotten.



Author Mr John Grothen looks over Glenrock Lagoon with his book on the history of the area.