

from notes made by Mr. A. N. Edwards Rottlund State School  
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-1915-

The tribes

Worora, Merginning, Wribe, Mobbilly and Beerwinning. The tribes seem to be quite distinct and although having a distinct language of their own understand one another's tongue.

Personal Adornment.

Their ornaments are carved shell worn pendant by string made of human hair, hanging from the neck or belt or any convenient spot.

Shells

Hair dressing

The hair dressing of the men, both on the top of the head and on the face is most elaborate. The men wear long hair done up in artistic coils, the women's hair is cut short. Hair among these tribes is very useful for string making.

Scars

In the case of men and women the body is adorned with neatly made cuts. These are neatly made like regular incisions along the lines of the ribs. They are purposely made and kept open and repaired. Dirt of some kind is inserted over this dirt the skin grows in the form of a ridge. These cuts are made all over the body.

Weapons

Impalements

Spears

The spears have stone heads and shafts of a cane growth found in the better watered Beerwinning-country. The head is fastened to the shaft by means of tree gum or resin and kangaroo hide (or sinew) in narrow strips.

The name for spears in general is Chenuilly in addition each type of spear has a name denoting the material from which the head is made

thus: Muruku green jasperoid quartz  
Gaymbume white quartzite (see above 6167-6171.)  
Unpallala milky or opalined quartz

Shields

Shields are made of heavy iron bark wood. The manufacture is secret and evidently very laborious. Most are plain, but a few ornamented ones were seen

Spear thrower

The spear thrower "Tangulje" is made of cane and has a stone peg fastened to the shaft of the thrower with gum + screw

Club or waddy

The waddy is a short heavy edged carried by the natives + is used to break the backs of game

Stone.

A stone is by no means a useless weapon in these people's hands

Bark Bucket

The Bark bucket "Kurregg" is a perfectly water-tight round receptacle of any size up to that of a pail but normally has about the capacity of a 44-gallon ~~jar~~ tin. The buckets are decorated with ochre marks and lines.

Fire Drill

The fire-drill, "deerugh" so called I believe because the soft wood of which it is made is the wood of that tree. The process may be described as follows "Two small sticks are used in the process. In the one small indentations are marked by grooves. Stick no: 2 having been moistened is rubbed lightly in sand or soil so that some particles cling to the stick, then it is fitted into the indentation in stick no: 1 and made to revolve backwards and forwards, the friction eventually producing a small amount of fire. This when placed in a small bundle of tinder or straw is held as an Easter or Cotswold egg might be in one hand - being larger in bulk than the palm of the hand - the result of the gentle but increasing swaying motion on the tinder is a noticeable large flame sufficient to kindle the pile of twigs"

Bark Sheath  
for  
Fire Sticks

Bark is used for many purposes. A neat sheath for the two sticks of the deerugh is often to be found, it is made "sufficiently tight to require steady pushing home of the deerugh on the part of the user.

Other Uses for  
Bark

Strips of bark are used as a protection against strong sun or rain. Blankets and carpets, such as are to be found, consist of this same material

## Stone Implements

"For sharp instruments stones are largely used either as found or struck in the point of handles stones chipped or cracked by fire heat are much appreciated for this purpose"

## Digging Stick

The Digging stick "Wandooma" is a sharply pointed hard stick used to dig out native yams etc found throughout the bush.

## Huts & Shelters

What houses the natives have consist of Pandanus palms or such like trees - the leaves neatly tied in hanging canopies the tree roofed over with bark. Such houses by the burning of a few small fires around them are kept remarkably dry and inviting.

## Food.

"The hunting for food is the main practical occupation of the people, the working hours being some few mornings and night. Sufficiently leisurely is the life of the native to allow of much ceremonial and song, singing speechifying etc - of game, which in this district is scarce Kangaroo and Wallaby are perhaps the only examples. Dugong is a mammal of the sea (and so white taste a good substitute for corned beef). The catching of a Dugong therefore is a fact that is quickly made known and food for the nonce thereafter is plentiful. Tales of the greater richness of the Beerwimming country are told, implying that many food game birds such as emu, turkey &c are much more abundant. As to birds practically any bird caught whether large or small is edible and taken as food. To the white hunter, game is scarce, black cockatoos and Kangaroos form the list of creatures to be shot at or near the Mission.

Vegetable foods Roots with the hot nature of a nasturtium or radish have been noted, both ~~small~~ small (plum. sized) and large about 5 or 6" in length - tapering. Berries and Plums some of a fair quality that might improve under cultivation have also been noted.

Conto.

Marine foods include shrimps, several kinds of oysters, cockles, whelks etc also "a slug found in mangrove shoots strongly similar to them in taste"

"Very good crabs are caught on the shore and these when grilled on the coals, the native mode of preparing them, give off an appetizing odour.

"Mullet, bream, stingaree and several other fish abound but owing to the primitive methods of capture... we fear few help to furnish their tables"

### Greetings

One morning we heard rather disquieting yells coming from the native camp... the natives were shouting good morning to one of their number employed as a boatman on the trip the lugger had just made.

"For nearer greetings I found... that the rubbing of one's own eye in the presence of one's friend was the equivalent of shaking hands."

### Gesture Language

"These native tribes have not only names for animals and family relationships but also a distinct sign for each"

"Thus a hand with the fingers in a fan-shaped bunch and the arm behind made to bend and rebend from the elbow is the sign for the emu.

The kangaroo and wallaby have a sign very much in common - there is a largeness in size in the one as compared with the other. A fish and a shark are similarly distinguished. A great twisting of the arm represents a snake...

The flap, flop, flop movement for a duck is very laughable and differs very picturesquely from the graceful movement of the eagle, hawk"

### Relationships

As regard relationship terms these are represented by parts of the human body. The English equivalent of all the terms is as yet unknown. The names and the part each ~~name~~ of the body touched when that particular relative is referred to in the classification is indicated on the accompanying diagram

Thus a man telling you he is the father "Eria" of a certain person will at the same time touch his ~~own~~ right shoulder (behind)

## Moreal Instruments

Bullroarer used makes a noise like a bee humming another musical instrument is "the reed" this is a simple boyish contrivance made by taking a small twig, splitting the same & inserting a grass - these being then blown upon.

Toys Toy catamaran made out of small green mangrove shoots.

worth of nostril is a much prized asset and sign of beauty, to accentuate this a hole is made in the septum and a stick inserted.

## Medical Treatment

Bonghuil human urine is a common remedy applied internally and externally

Jumbur a hot stone (heated in a fire) is applied to the abdomen for stomachic troubles.

Relus are used for cleaning the teeth

9/11/10  
10/10/11