

ABORIGINAL WORKSHOPS ON THE COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES, AND THEIR CONTENTS.

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Mr. Walter Howchin appears to have discovered a large number of small weapons and implements of various kinds on the South Australian sea-board, but there is no indication as to whether these stone implements were found scattered over the surface generally or derived from "workshops." The instruments are enumerated as follows:— (1) Stone points; (2) Flakes (knives), in seven varieties of single-edged, ridged, flat and polygonal, lanceolate, broad, serrated and trimmed; (3) Spear-heads of a type which seems to be restricted to a narrow coastal belt; (4) Chisels; (5) Gouges; (6) Awls; (7) Scrapers, divided into eleven distinct varieties; (8) Hammers; (9) Anvils; (10) Fabricators; (11) Cores.

Mr. Brough Smyth gave the following account as to the use of stone implements;— "The Western Australians use small splinters of quartz for making the long deep cuts which may be seen on almost every native — both men and women — across the breast and arms, with a similar fragment stuck to the end of a stick they dress and cut their kangaroo skins in preparing them for use as cloaks. They also stick thin splinters of quartz, broken by their teeth, to the side of a short stick to serve as a saw"

11. — DESCRIPTION OF LOCALITIES.

During our researches traces of minor "workshops" which yielded various weapons, chips, flakes, and other objects of interest were found at Gerringong, Redhead, Ulladulla and Milton on the South Coast. There is also evidence of a large "workshop" on the southern end of Wollongong Beach, a little distance from the racecourse stand. The most extensive "workshop" met with, however, is situated at Bellambi Beach (Pl. xlv.). This area is many acres in extent, and is more or less densely strewn with stones of all descriptions, at least such as are usually found on shell heaps, camping grounds or workshops. Of the larger stones observed, many consisted of irregular pieces of sandstone (fire stones?), fragments of siliceous fossil tree stems, oval or rounded flattish boulders, probably used as grindstones for pounding seeds, others of the same shape but smaller, or such as were suitable for the manufacture of tomahawks. The latter were very numerous, and also other thicker stones frequently with central pits as if they had been used as anvils for cracking large seeds or fruit-stones on.

The smaller stones fit for use were present in vast numbers, and consisted for the most part of waterworn pebbles, more or less egg-shaped. They are very variable in size and also in composition; a large number of them had already been tested as to suitability for cores or from which instruments had been manufactured. The rest of the ground was covered with innumerable chips, flakes, cores, together with a fair sprinkling of carefully-worked weapons, as well as others upon which much labour had evidently been expended, and yet through a flaw in the stone, or want of care or skill on the part of the operator, proved to be "wasters."

There is ample evidence that many of the sand dunes were at one time much higher than they are now, and also that in some parts they had been covered with vegetation interspersed with native camping grounds, upon which vast quantities of shells were deposited; in course of time the vegetation was covered by sand drifts, other shell heaps formed at the summit, and the whole again buried. The periods of time required for these various changes must have been very great, and it has required a still greater lapse of time to produce the present condition. The shells, probably owing to the rainfall, have in many instances been dissolved and the constituent lime deposited around the roots and stems of the plants which lived on the surface. Many instances proving the correctness of the views as above related may be seen on the coast at Maroubra and Bondi, but more especially at Cronulla and Bellambi. In other spots the beds of shells are still visible, but in various stages of decay, either having been accumulated more recently or protected by thick layers of black soil and covered with vegetation. The edges of some of the sand cliffs at Cronulla, Maroubra and Bellambi afford many sections illustrative of the above remarks. These cliffs are gradually being denuded by the action of the wind, and constant falls are taking place, leaving the shells and stones either at the foot of a cliff or around the base of some large mound on which vegetation, soil and other shells and stones are still in situ. The sand and soil are then rapidly blown away, leaving the shells and stones scattered about the surface; a gale from one quarter will cover the area, and windy squalls from another will lay it bare.

The above article was submitted by Mr. John Ruffels of Bondi, as a reminder to members of the significance of the area near Bellambi now being developed by Wollongong City Council as The Pioneer Beach Housing Estate.

With the recent discovery of an ancient lake in this area, along with the discovery of one of the last remaining finds of the famous 'Bulli Soil' used on the Sydney cricket ground, as well as the extensive aboriginal midden which graced the sight, it may have been a major blunder that further archaeological research was not undertaken before Council permitted development of the site. It is yet another lost opportunity for the cause of history and heritage in the Gong.

Future generations may not look kindly upon the fake Federation facades now being erected on the site.

Joseph Davis