

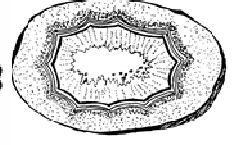
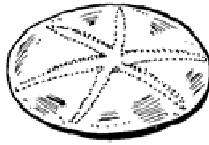
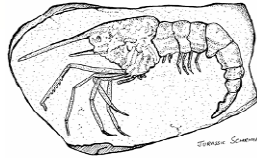
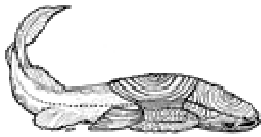


GEMBOREE 2017

INFORMATION E-NEWSLETTER

November 2016 – Edition 8

Tony Luchetti Showground, Lithgow – Easter – 14th – 17th April, 2017



FROM THE E-NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The year is flying by and would you believe it is Christmas next month. All is well in hand for the forthcoming GEMBOREE 2017 so welcome to Issue No 8 for November, 2016.

Remember you can request earlier issues, just drop me an email and I can send them.



Above, just one pavilion of the GEMBOREE 2005 at Bathurst.

For those getting the newsletter for the first time the 53rd National Gem & Mineral Show, known as GEMBOREE 2017, will be held from Friday 14th to Monday 17th April, 2017, at Tony Luchetti Showground in Lithgow in New South Wales. It is being staged by the Gem & Lapidary Council of N.S.W. Inc. under the auspices of the Australian Federation of Lapidary & Allied Crafts Association Inc. Various gem and lapidary clubs from around New South Wales are assisting in the organisation and co-ordination of the various aspects of this huge undertaking which will draw a large crowd of lapidaries and hobbyists, as well as the general public.

Being a National Gem & Mineral Show the displays and competitive exhibits are first class and come from all over Australia. Some of the judging takes place some two months prior to the event in April 2017. Professional dealers also travel many hundreds and hundreds of kilometres to bring their wide range of

minerals, gemstones, fossils, jewellery, lapidary equipment and supplies, books and a lot more.



Above, another pavilion at the GEMBOREE 2005.



I hear that people who intend to travel to Lithgow for GEMBOREE 2017 have already started to make bookings for their accommodation. Remember Lithgow is in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales and has a most picturesque environment. Should you need accommodation or other local information you can contact the very informed staff at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre (above), 1137 Great Western Hwy, Lithgow. NSW 2790 or telephone 1300760276 or email tourism@lithgow.com or www.tourism.lithgow.com

Alan McRae, FAIHA – GEMBOREE 2017

e-newsletter Editor and Publicity Officer

GEMBOREE 2017 – LITHGOW – NSW

The (seemingly never-ending) Rhodonite trophies story. Submitted by Tony Try



Background: When New South Wales ran the GEMBOREE at Bathurst in 2011, there was naturally a hive of activity as various groups endeavoured to make it a successful event. History will tell you that it was – particularly with regard to the number of entries received for the various competitions, which totalled nearly 1,300. What history does NOT tell you is that as final arrangements were made, trophies bought and allocated as one does in the final weeks, there was a suggestion by Arthur Roffey that it would be nice if the trophies could be something distinctly New South Wales. (Keep in mind that the trophies had already been bought). It was suggested that the trophies could be made out of Rhodonite. It was a nice thought, but obviously far too late in the scheme of things to accomplish. However, it was decided then that the Competition Committee for the GEMBOREE 2017 (which looked like being made up of the same people) would see what they could do and possibly use the Rhodonite that had been suggested. After all there was plenty of time – another five years to get it designed and made.

The Competition Committee for the GEMBOREE 2017, therefore decided it would be a good idea to start early to avoid potential problems. To this end a N.S.W. supplier of Rhodonite was approached to see if he would supply the Rhodonite for the trophies. During the discussions he magnanimously agreed to actually make and donate the entire trophy. We then suggested that he should have a plaque on the base of each trophy advertising the fact that he had done this, as it would also be a good advertisement for his Rhodonite. It was agreed that one trophy would be made as an example to be submitted to the N.S.W. Gem and Lapidary Council, for approval/comment, before the remainder were made.

Unfortunately these arrangements did not come to fruition, and after some discussion with the supplier, in 2014, it became obvious that things were not going to work out as we had hoped. Being the eternal optimist,

I hoped that he would at least make some Rhodonite available, but it wasn't even offered for sale.

Trophy construction: The committee then decided to try and have a suitable trophy constructed, by using the skills and resources within the various N.S.W. lapidary clubs. A call went out for clubs to donate Rhodonite, which could be cut into pieces that were 100 x 80 x 10mm. Nothing happened for some time, so Barbara bought a couple of hundred dollars worth of this material and we started to cut it up at home. I badly misjudged our need and much of what we bought was unsuitable, as we could not get pieces of the required dimensions from them. It is quite amazing how big a piece of rock one needs to have in order to get what we required. The material that we could not use was donated to the Northern Districts Lapidary (N.D.L.C.) club for use by members in their cutting room. Nelson Robertson then heard of our plight and donated some lumps of Rhodonite from his own supply. Once again, much of it was unsuitable for the same reasons. Nelson then asked that any of his material that could not be used should be given to the Central Coast Lapidary Club (C.C.L.C.), as it was ideal for the cutting of cabochons. This was done.

About this time it was realised that we needed someone with some good woodworking skills to make up the bases i.e. someone with skills far greater than mine. We approached a N.D.L.C. member – Joe Tahka – to ask if he would help out with this work. He readily agreed and quickly made up a couple of models from which we made a choice.

The Northern Districts Lapidary Club (N.D.L.C.) Committee then approved that a donation of Rhodonite slabs be made available from their own resources, for the trophies. Lou Sun, as the Man-in-Charge of the rock storeroom set about this task, and over a period of time gave me a number of slabs, which I then cut into pieces, as close as I could, to the required size. All the off-cuts were returned to the club as ideal capping material.

The vibralap at home had not been used for some time, so it was with a little trepidation that we uncovered it, cleaned it up and switched it on. Thankfully everything worked well and a few of the cut pieces were put on for the first round of treatment. While there were a number of suggestions concerning how the Rhodonite should be prepared it was ultimately decided to only polish the two large flat sides and not polish the edges – purely because of the work and time involved. Some of the pieces that we had received had some fairly deep saw blade marks on them, which took quite a bit of work to remove.

However, it finished up taking between three and four weeks to polish the two major flat sides of the Rhodonite – if all went well – with the machine going 24 hours per day and seven days per week.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who assisted in bringing this project to what I believe is a successful completion. And if I have failed to mention/thank anyone in this article, that should have been mentioned by name, I do sincerely apologise.

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Arthur Roffey then found some old planks that he thought would be suitable to make up the bases for the trophies, once they had been cleaned up. Alan Clarke from the C.C.L.C. offered to take them home and put them through his planer to see how they came up. A couple of days later we were told that he had not only put the wood through the planer, but had also made up all the bases, as per the sample that we had selected from Joe's work. I know that Alan likes woodwork, but this was completely unexpected, although greatly appreciated. His wife, Annette, told us quietly that apparently he had had a "ball" and really enjoyed doing it. I then advised Joe that he no longer had a job and thanked him again for his offer of helping out.

The first polished pieces that we were happy with, were given to Nelson Robertson, as our carving Guru, who had agreed to do the etching and colouring of the outline of the map of NSW onto the Rhodonite. These were then given back to Alan Clarke who, because all the slabs were slightly different sizes, had to individually carve a slot in the wooden base to neatly take each piece of Rhodonite. This was another very time consuming job. As small batches of polished pieces became available this process was repeated, rather than waiting for it all to be done at once.

The C.C.L.C. then discovered that they had a very large piece of Rhodonite that was too big to be put through the club's saws and for this reason had been virtually forgotten about. This was offered as potential slabs if someone could be found to cut it up. John Brehens from the Parramatta Holroyd Lapidary Club believed that they had a saw big enough to do the job, so the piece was ultimately delivered there. However, it proved to be too large even for their equipment, so it was taken to a stone mason who was able to cut it in half, which then allowed the Parramatta equipment to be able to handle it. As requested, a total of sixteen pieces were cut from this material. Two very large remaining pieces and a bundle of offcuts were then returned to the C.C.L.C.

Because trophies are normally bought across the counter and numbers are not a problem, we debated the major question of how many of these Rhodonite trophies to make. Because we could not simply make more appear at a moment's notice if required, an estimate of competition entries had to be made, as well as allow for tied scores which would mean two rather than one trophy was needed.

We therefore hit on the number of forty trophies to be made, and hoped that we did not need any more. The production of these one-off trophies has taken a lot of work by a lot of people over a long time. It has tested



Fossilised ammonites (one being held left) are very common in many areas of the world. They are reasonably priced and there are a great variety that will add interest to anyone's fossil collection. In their day it is thought that there could be over 10,000 different species. They possess a well recognised ribbed spiral form with their name originating from the Greek and Egyptian ram-horned god known as 'Ammon'.

It was Pliny the Elder, who was an official in the Roman Court in Pompeii, who was in charge of the fleet in the area of the Bay of Naples and a naturalist, who

named these fossils *ammonis cornua* or the ‘horns of Ammon’. The Egyptian god Ammon (Amun) was also typically depicted wearing ram’s horns.

Generally the ammonite's coiled shell is the only part of these sea creatures to be conserved as a fossil.

Ammonites were molluscs which survived in the oceans some 240 to 65 million years ago and along with the dinosaurs, became extinct. They existed for more than 160,000,000 years from the Early Triassic to the Late Cretaceous Period. It is thought they lived about two years each retaining their original shell throughout their life. As the ammonite grew older it added new and larger chambers to the opened end of its shell in which it lived.

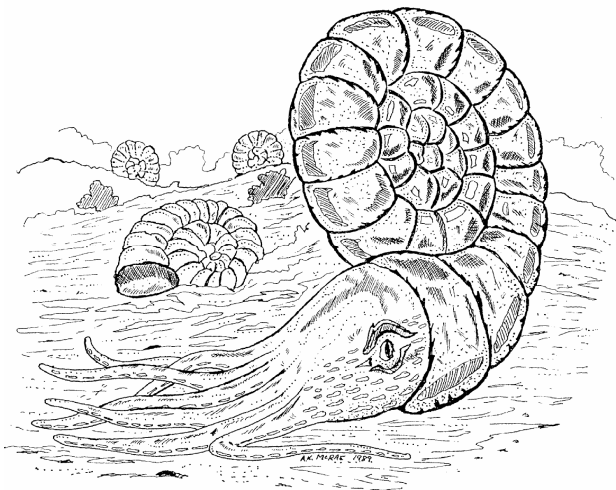
Varying in size from 2 cm to 2.5 meters they lived in their various coil-shaped shells and ate small sea creatures and tiny organisms. The females of some species grew larger than the males, in some cases four times larger.

They initially evolved some 415 million years ago when they just had a small straight shell called a bacrite. They then developed into a great variety of forms, curled shells and size.

Ammonites lived in shallow waters of less than 300 feet where these predators, known as cephalopods, still have their relatives around today in the form of the squid, octopus and the cuttlefish. They ate fish, small crustaceans, krill, corals, brachiopods, mollusks and other ammonites which they would stalk before extending their tentacles to grasp it. It was then fed into its jaws found at the base of the tentacles.



The ammonite's shell was divided into 26 gas-filled chambers which acted like flotation tanks and prevented the ammonites from sinking. To move up or down the creature adjusted the gas levels in each chamber and pumped water in and out. In shallow waters though these creatures became the prey of reptiles such as the mosasaurs and plesiosaurs, the latter a large marine sauropterygian reptile with a small head. There have even been ammonite fossils found with the teeth marks of these reptiles.



Ammonites were ancestors of today's modern octopus who can also squirt out ink. The ammonite's defensive ink would also confuse their predators.

As the ammonites evolutionised they grew ribs and spines on their shells. This gave their shells added strength. They also helped camouflage the ammonites when they hid amongst the rocks on the sea floor. Some ammonite fossils are found these days with an impressive shiny gold look. This is from the copper pyrites (fool's gold) that has coated or replaced the original fossil form.

ZIG ZAG RAILWAY – WHAT A STORY



Possibly the most well-known feature of Lithgow is the Zig Zag Railway which most agree was a prodigious accomplishment. One business to use the feature on its advertising was Corbett's Great Western Zigzag Brewery.

As the Western Main Railway inched its way through the Blue Mountains in the 1860s from Penrith towards Bathurst, engineers, in particular the Engineer-in-chief of the New South Wales Government Railways, John Whitton, must have wondered how they would get down into the Lithgow valley. The Zig Zag Railway was in the end designed by Whitton and the project was constructed in about two and a half years, from 1866 to 18th October, 1869. As it turned out it was never officially opened.

The railway line had arrived at Penrith in 1862 and there were grave doubts as to the prospect of getting a railway across the mountains, except at an exorbitant expense. Many thought the mountain range was again an impenetrable obstacle as far as a railway was concerned. Even the surveyors who surveyed the route had to be dropped over the cliff edge in large wickerwork baskets to do their job.

The New South Wales Colonial Government had promised Bathurst that they would bring the railway through and with the iron ore production and coal from the mines in the Lithgow Valley requiring exploitation a rail line was essential. Also there was the development of shale deposits in the area. The farmers and vegetable growers also had livestock and produce to get to the Sydney markets from regions over the Blue Mountains.

The Commissioner of Railways during the time of the Zig Zag project was Mr. John Rae (1861-1870) who was very impressed by John Whitten's capability.

After weighing up costs it was decided that the proposal of miners blasting out a two mile long tunnel and lining it with bricks verses a system that incorporated a 'zig zag' line, and chose the latter. Clarence was the last station before the line was to go down into the Lithgow Valley at a gradient of 1 in 42, a little under 690 feet below and a distance of 5 miles for the descent. After discussions it was decided that

Whitton's idea of a single 'zig zag' was the best use of resources and the most cost effective. Basically it was an enormous 'Z' sculpted in the valley wall. What was unknown at the time was how quickly the use of the line would grow.



John Whitton who had been born in Yorkshire in 1819. He and his new wife Elizabeth, nee Fowler, sailed for Sydney arriving in December 1856. Elizabeth Fowler was a sister of Sir John Fowler who was already a consulting engineer to the Government of New South Wales.

Already he was very knowledgeable on the construction of railways having worked for several railway engineers and planners for a decade. He had also learnt that many a good idea had been lost due to political bickering and personal endeavours.

On a salary of £1,500 per annum Whitton was engaged by the New South Wales Government as their Engineer-in-Chief for the Railways. He found himself in charge of a system with just 21 miles of laid rails and engines that used wood in their boilers. Whitton soon had them altered to coal fired.



Zigzag in 1909.

It wasn't long before the young engineer was arguing with the Government who wanted the line constructed on a shoe-string. He had an inclination for gentler curves and flatter grades, formed culverts, iron railway

bridges, allowances for adding a second line and other ideas that the Government tried to generally prevent to save costs. He was successful in maintaining the gauge of the New South Railways as their standard gauge of 4 ft. 8 ½ inches (1435 mm).

Whitton was always strict with contractors and firm in negotiations. He was also aware of workers who were not paid by contractors even to the point where he would award the job to a new contractor, if need be, to maintain work for the men.

As the project neared completion the doubters began to hail "The Great Zig Zag as one of the engineering wonders of the Victorian age".

Patrick Higgins was the contractor for the project with George Cowdery as the Resident Engineer. Initially they had plans to build five sandstone viaducts along with three tunnels which were to be arched in with solid sandstone masonry. Ideas changed and in the end only three viaducts were constructed. Whilst horses could be used to haul loads there were other locations where any rock fill had to be loaded by hand into barrows or carts and wheeled to where it was required. If one could not handle hard work this was not the place for some.



As work proceeded the area looked like the early goldfields with groups of tents set up for the workers to live in. it took over 600 men to complete the undertaking with the workers paid 1s 3d (15 cents) per day with an extra sixpence if one used their own horse. Some specialist tradesmen were brought into New South Wales such as some stonemasons who sailed from Italy.

Almost all the work was slow and hand-done with men with miner's experience getting instant work. Much of the workforce were housed in canvas tents that would have been very cold during the winter months.

Workmen drilling holes for blasting worked in groups of threes – a pair held the metal hand auger whilst another belted it with a heavy sledge hammer. A quarry was opened up to supply sandstone for the job.

It took all sorts of jobs to construct the railway such as surveyors, engineers, foremen, blacksmiths, carpenters, stone masons, gangers, sleeper cutters,

black powder men, rail layers, hammermen, billy boys, signalmen, teamsters, timber-cutters, labourers, cooks and others. Then there were contractors who brought in aggregate stone or gravel to form the track bed. Many of the men earned one shilling and threepence per day (below).



To keep an eye on the work John Whitton seated himself on a bench carved into the local stone, from here he sent directions to the workmen via a heliograph, semaphore flags or messengers on foot or riders on horseback. The spot was named the "Engineer's Lookout".



Photo of the viaduct c. 1950s

A little over half way through the work miners in the No 2 tunnel noticed that flaws and fissures were developing so it was decided to form it into a cutting. For some unknown reason they decided to make it a special occasion. The Countess of Belmore was invited to push the plunger. The tunnel was 49 and a half yards long and two tons of gunpowder was used to blow it up. Mr. Cracknell of the Telegraph Department was responsible for securing the simultaneous explosion of the mine, using 'electricity'. The Countess duly arrived on 16th September, 1868, along with the Governor, Lady Belmore and their suite to One Tree Hill where horsedrawn carriages were waiting to take them to the tunnel. Signalmen were in place around the valley to signal that all was clear. At the last moment a workman appeared walking towards the tunnel. Lots called to him as he headed closer to the tunnel. Then

the police chased him out of harm's way before the Countess joined the contacts and the tunnel exploded with a roar reverberating down the valley followed by a mass of rock crashing down to the valley floor. The Countess was given a number of cheers. The explosion destroyed the road that the official party had arrived on and they had to walk out along with the reporter from the Bathurst Times.

On completion the Zig Zag went into use, however over the next three to four decades various modifications took place to try to speed everything up as well as handling longer trains. It was not a fast process and as the early trains had just one brake on the engine, engine drivers had to move really slowly. Often the job could take three hours or more. The Railway Department later put in twin tracks as well as a run-around.




Above - No 7 Tunnel in the Zig Zag deviation.

If you are ever in Central Railway Station in Sydney look for the memorial to John Whitton who was the "The father of our railway system". On his retirement in 1889 some 2,200 miles of track was being operated. Henry Deane was John Whitton's successor. John died in February 1898, in Sydney, aged 80. His wife survived him as did his son and two daughters.



Photo above taken in 1959.



**Buy a GEMBOREE
2017 Badge**

**to remember your trip
to Lithgow**

**at Easter 2017 only \$6
each.**

LITHGOW'S EARLIEST INHABITANTS

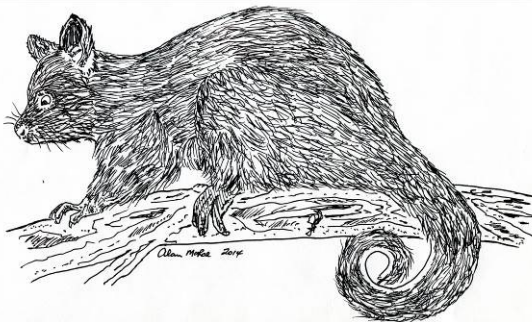


An impression of an aboriginal by Surveyor Thomas Mitchell.

Before the Europeans arrived in the Lithgow district the land was occupied by the Wiradjuri to the west and north, the Darug (also spelt Dharug, Daruk, Dharuk, Dharuck and Dharruk) from the east and the Gundungurra, (spelt also Gundungurru, Gandangara), Wywandy and Therabulat from the southeast and was predominantly over the Lithgow area. These traditional aboriginal people around Lithgow had their own territory and lived in family groups.

Members of the various tribes would meet other tribal members as they moved around the countryside, traded or passed through mutual territory.

The earliest tribes in Australia have been here for maybe 60,000 years before the Europeans arrived and slowly took over the lands that the various tribes had traversed for so long to live and locate their food. Some tribes had to cope with the last Ice Age which occurred some 20,000 years ago at which time they



Like other aboriginal tribes around Australia each tribe travelled and dwelled in smaller family groups of men, women and children, generally in groups of twenty five to thirty five or so. These groups incorporated the relatives of unmarried females and other males.

Sometimes raids would take place to get extra females not of their particular grouping.

Clever hunters and gatherers, each tribe learnt the breeding cycles of their prey and knew when not to take certain animals such as if kangaroo numbers were low they should leave the breeding females to allow

would have moved to the coastal regions or moved north to a warmer climate.

Gregory Blaxland's diary makes mention of local aboriginals as he traversed the Blue Mountains with fellow explorers William Lawson and W.C. Wentworth in their attempt to cross the so called "impeneratable barrier." Blaxland noted that they came upon "native fires left the day before, it was judged from the shavings and pieces of sharp stones, the natives had been sharpening their spears." He also said that the natives sucked the flowers for its honey.

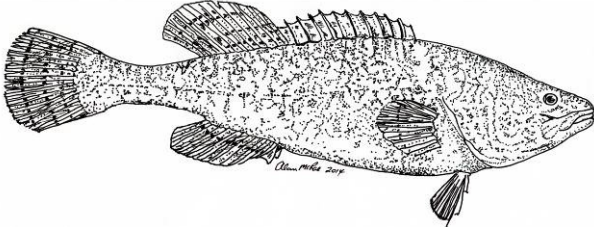
Thomas Brown of Lithgow appears to have had reasonable relations with the local aboriginal people on whose land he squatted. James Walker had accumulated large tracts of land on the Castlereagh as well as at Capertee, Lue, Wolgan and Wallerawang and preserved respectable relations with various tribes. Andrew Brown's land at Coerwull had aboriginal natives living on his property where they hunted and fished for their food.

Later Thomas Brown, as Police Magistrate at Hartley, issued free Government blankets to Aboriginal people.

Wiradjuri country encompasses a large area from the eastern side of the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and Orange and out to Dubbo and Nyngan. Then the line moves south to Hay and Albury-Wodonga. With such a massive area naturally their countryside varied from very rugged, to woodlands, to open grassland, river flats and drier plains. Their area also includes the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers making it the largest geographic area of any tribe.

The Darug group were spread over the southeast bounded by the Hawkesbury River, Appin, through to Cowpastures and the George's River. The Gundungurra tribe, sometimes mentioned as the Mountain People, pursued their food from Hartley through the Burragorang and Megalong Valleys, traversing country to the Nepean River. Their land also extended down towards Goulburn.

numbers to increase. If their prey travelled they understood where they needed to be to find them. Seasonal foods found the family groups travelling around their lands to take advantage of abundant nutrition such as the Bogong moths or if the rains were good and the seasons were green that over several years kangaroo numbers would increase.



Fishing was another food exploited throughout the tribal areas which boasted many rivers and streams which in the early days abounded in fish such as the Murray cod along with freshwater crayfish and mussels. Various fishing methods were used from spearing, making fishhooks or laying out fish traps usually made from stones.

There was generally an abundance of food with the men, women and children collecting bird's eggs, waterfowl, wild honey, goannas, nuts, furry tailed possums, emus, seeds, platypus, tubers, bulbs and yams, echidnas, fruits, swans, kangaroos, various birds, wild ducks, berries, snakes, lizards, wallabies and much more. They were good climbers able to shimmy up tall trees to a bird's nest high at the top.



Above are small Brown Quail, also called a swamp or silver quail and lay clutches of seven to 10 eggs, both of which were eaten by the Lithgow aboriginals. Nests are usually found near a river or creek and would be hidden well. The quails would find a depression under some overhanging grasses and line the nest with fine grass.

When they spotted a covey of quails which normally feed in the early morning or at dusk, they would use branches to flush them out of the undergrowth or bracken as the quails tend to lay low and hide then run away hastily. The plump little birds, preferably females as they are slightly larger, would be cooked on the open fire.

These native ground-dwelling birds rarely fly. Their colouring would vary from grey-brown to reddish-

brown with fine streaks of white. Most exhibit dark brown barring with red to yellow eyes, orangeish-yellowish legs and a small black bill.

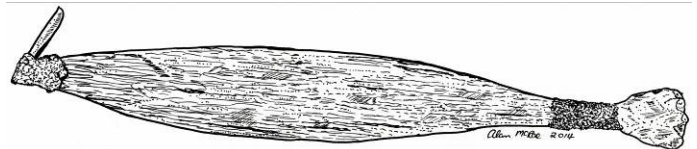
Other foods, such as the gathering of seeds and tubers, were left for the womenfolk. Nuts were collected and eaten raw whilst others were roasted in the ashes. Seeds could be ground into a 'flour' and mixed with water before being cooked into a 'flat bread'. The Australian aboriginals are believed to be the first in the world to grind seeds using stones.

Travelling around each year meant that the elders accumulated the knowledge to keep their tribe alive. This meant that they could occupy earlier campsites each year. Ceremonies, gatherings and feasts were important to these tribal people and these took place on a regular basis and have been performed for thousands of years. Then there were the sacred ceremonies which meant that certain members of the clan could not attend, such as females during the initiation of the young men.

Rules were made by the elders of the tribe who also enforced them. This helped maintain the rigid order within the groups. Punishments could vary from a beating, spearing or banishment. There were no 'chiefs' or 'kings' in their hierarchy, though Europeans early on gave out breast plates indicating as such.

The men made their own tools and weapons. They also put ground edges on their cutting tools.

All men carried hunting spears made of some suitable timber such as one of the wattles, the length required was about 9 feet long. To straighten the green timber the men would heat it over a low fire to dry it out and straighten them. Whilst the slow drying process is taking place a point was sharpened at one end and a dent put in the other so it can be used with a spear thrower. The pointed end was also hardened over the flames. Sometimes a wooden or bone 'barb' would be attached, this being fastened using sinew from a kangaroo or emu and vegetable gum. Barbs might be added to fighting spears as anyone wounded by them would get a worse injury.



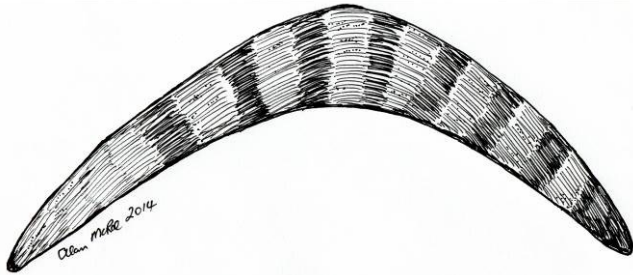
To allow the men to throw their spears greater distances they made and used a spear thrower called a Woomera (above) which was made from timber and was generally tapered. This allows a spear to be thrown at a significantly more powerful speed at one's prey or, if necessary, at one's antagonist. They have a small piece of bone or wood shaped like a small peg on one end that the end of the spear is placed on. The other end often had a worked piece of white quartz held in with resin or gum and is useful for cutting. The

quartz end is the end gripped for throwing the spear.



Shields were made by the men for warfare and gatherings. Their designs vary a good deal as did the trees whose wood was used to make them. The men made two distinct types – one being lighter, wider and more oval in shape with a handle in the back to hold onto, this one was generally for warding off an adversary's spears. This larger one was commonly decorated with white and red ochre. The other type was much heavier and narrower

designed to be used for close contact fighting when clubs were being used. They can exhibit quite smooth designs to highly fluted ones.



Boomerangs were made of timber and are of two sorts, the returning and the non-return (also called throwing or killer boomerang) the latter is slightly longer than the other, the type determining their shape. Used by the Aboriginal men for hunting their prey, they would be carried on all hunting trips. They were used on other occasions such as ceremonies and rituals, clapping two of them together for 'music' during corroborees, fighting or a hammer and digging tool for food. The non-returning or 'throwing' boomerangs were propelled with considerable accuracy to stun or slay their prey or murder their enemy or person to be punished.



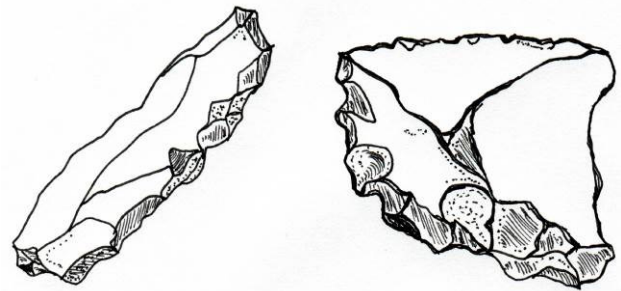
Another tool was the wooden club. Made by the men, these varied quite a bit in size and shape. These, like the spears, would be fire-hardened. Some boasted sharpened wooden spikes or milky quartz added to injure one's enemy in battle. Some exhibit large bulbous ends whilst other less offensive types were made for rituals and other ceremonies. They could also be used for close contact fighting if necessary. These same tools were often used for digging and can be referred to as digging sticks.

Various aboriginal lands still yield examples of stone points and other implements. Many are worked or trimmed making uniface (trimmed on one side) or

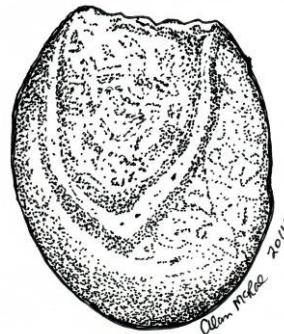
biface (trimmed both sides) tools. The men of the tribe manufactured stone implements. The earliest of these



stone tools made by past aboriginals are evidence to the longevity of some aboriginal tribes on our continent. Stones were either ground or flaked into shape, some having a combination of the two methods. Sometimes fire was used to break up certain types of stone which shattered when it got really hot or water thrown over them. Tool making could take up quite a good deal of time especially if grinding a stone axe blade.



Not all types of stone in the region was suitable for making tools. The best types of stone used by early aboriginal tribes appear to be rich in silica and hard and brittle. Whilst the most commonly found examples are made from flint, silcrete, quartzite, quartz and chert we also see examples using blue basalt, sandstone, granite, chalcedony, greywacke, limestone, ironstones and some others being worked. Where large amounts of stone occurred which the aboriginal people used extensively and regularly are referred to as quarries.



Aborigines also quarried such stone from outcrops of bedrock or collected it as pebbles from rivers and the beds of streams. Sometimes flaked stone artefacts found on Aboriginal sites are made from stone types that do not occur naturally in the area. This means they must

have been carried long distances and probably have been traded.

There are a number of basic types of worked stone pieces made by the Lithgow tribes. One of the basic types were made by the men who would hit a selected piece of stone which was referred to as a core using what was called a



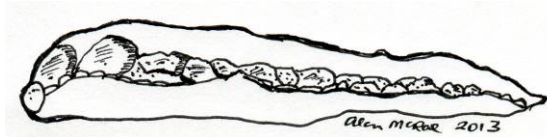
'hammerstone' (a pebble used as a 'hammer'). This invariably saw a sharp fragment of stone break off, this sharp fragment known as a 'flake'.

These sharp pieces made good scrapers, these being important to both the men and the women of a tribe. The men used them for smoothing many of their wooden weapons such as shields, diggings sticks, clubs, boomerangs and spears.

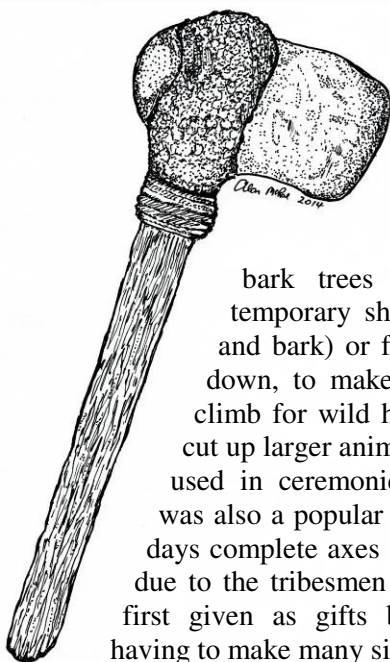
The females used scrapers to remove meat and fat off the kangaroos and other animals. Some bones were used also as scrapers with long bones from the kangaroo being popular (below).



As flakes lost their 'edge' and became blunt they could be worked again by further flaking of the cutting edge a number of times, a small piece at time. If a 'skinning knife' was wanted a flattish piece of suitable stone was selected and knapped to a tapered sharp cutting edge. Sometimes gum would be applied to the back to make it easier to hold. These pieces could be made quite quickly by experienced tribal men.



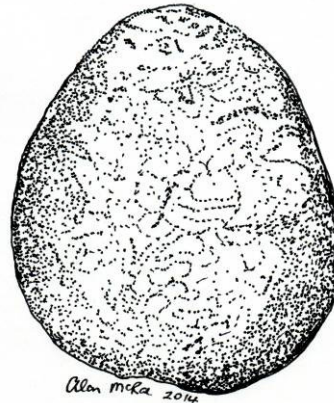
One item used by the Aboriginal men that took up considerable time was the manufacture of an axe head. These pieces would later have a handle attached. Most worked-edge axes are ovalish to roundish in shape with the smoothed sharpened edge at one end. They can vary in size quite considerably with some even having a narrowed end.



Axes (left) were quite a prized item and the men would have used them to bark trees to make gunyahs (a temporary shelter made of branches and bark) or for a canoe, to cut trees down, to make foot holes in trees to climb for wild honey or bird's eggs, to cut up larger animals, for fighting or even used in ceremonies. The completed axe was also a popular trade item though these days complete axes are hard to find. This is due to the tribesmen using metal axes, their first given as gifts by Europeans and not having to make many since.

The stone to be used for these usually came from the best rock quarry they knew about or could find, the hardest stone being preferable. After shaping it to the

rough size that they wanted, the rest of the process was invariably done elsewhere. These rough chunks are known as a 'blank' with these pieces sometimes being traded with other clans or other tribes. Finding a nice water-worn, suitably shaped river pebble saved time in shaping a blank so these were used too.



Then came the most laborious part of the process of axe-making, a process that could take months or even years to complete. After a suitable grinding site was found warriors would begin grinding to remove any sharp edges with the process leaving deep grooves at the site which one can still see today.

Sandstone was a brilliant stone for grinding and it was usually near water which aided the process.

How much work was done in preparing the blade obviously depended on the individual. The 'hammer stone' (above) could be used in the process. Some axe-blades found exhibit one or more ground cutting edges. The polishing process made the blades more robust. Some have been polished smooth all over to a fine finish rather than just the usual cutting edge.

Often stone axe blades have a central groove that has been pecked out which helped in attaching the handle. The maker would use sinew from a kangaroo and natural resin and plant fibre to attach the completed axe head onto a sturdy short wooden handle. This is now referred to as a hafted axe. If an axe blade was chipped or broken it could be reworked again.



As time went on with more and more land grants denying increasingly more land traditionally used by the various Aboriginal tribes for hunting and the lifestyle that they were used to for thousands of years was taken away. Access to their sacred sites was denied as more and more Europeans arrived and areas were fenced off.

In 1816 warriors from the Gundungurra tribe travelled from the Wingecarribee River near Bowral in the Southern Highlands to attack the military post at Glenroy. It was subsequently reinforced with more troops.

The denial of land led to more and more violent clashes mainly between the various tribes and Europeans, especially between 1821 and 1827 when

the Wiradjuri responded with payback using traditional weapons (below). This was traditionally instituted when they responded to someone being killed or an act of violence had taken place against them. Historians have named this period in the 1820s as the Bathurst Wars.



All the tribe's population went into decline, however one of the largest causes was the diseases brought by the Europeans which were previously unknown to the native population. Diseases and illnesses such as colds, smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, bronchitis, scarlet fever, influenza and chicken pox, many proving fatal and the downfall of many a native man, woman and child.

In an attempt to assist the natives, Governor Macquarie introduced his annual feast idea which was to invite the natives to come to Parramatta where they would receive gifts of blankets, food stuffs and other items. This first took place in December 1816 and was continued in one form or another for many years. The Sydney Morning Herald noted on 13th June, 1849, "Blankets for the Blacks – The Government has lately sent to Bathurst and other places throughout the colony, an abundant supply of blankets for the aborigines. Many of our sable friends have applied at the Bathurst Police Office for the same, and have, of course, obtained them."

On 30th June, 1888, it was reported, "GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT. A bale of blankets supplied by the Government for the aborigines of the Hartley district is now lying at the courthouse, Lithgow, waiting to be claimed by the original inhabitants of New South Wales. These blankets will possibly remain there a good while, as only a very few aborigines are now in this district and those who are here, I think, are too proud to take Government assistance in any way. A little while ago the Hartley district had a tribe of blacks but they are all gone."

LITHGONIANS CELEBRATE THE ENDING OF THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING



On 18th May, 1900, the Lithgow Mercury carried a story on the "THE RELIEF OF MAFEKING - TODAY'S NEWS. EXCITEMENT AND JUBILATION IN LITHGOW." It went on, "Our Sydney messages received early this morning gave the first news of the reported relief of Mafeking. Still, confirmation was lacking. Shortly before noon, Mr. Sandford received a wire from his Sydney agent to the effect that the news had been confirmed. This was promptly circulated at the ironworks and was greeted with great cheering. The Union Jack was also run up on a previously prepared flag pole. A minute or two after, the new fire bell was set going at the fire station in Main Street and this brought all the people out of doors."

"The news spread like wild-fire. The children were released from school and their numbers increased the throng about the streets. Bells clanged, whistles blew in various quarters, crackers were let off and everybody wore a broad smile. Baden-Powell and his band of heroes have no warmer admirers anywhere than here and the utmost enthusiasm was shown. At 1 p.m. to-day, our Sydney correspondents wired that the news of the relief was believed to be true, but there was nothing official. Flags are now flying from many residences in Lithgow. Everybody able to produce a bit of bunting has it on display. Many of the business places are closing early this afternoon and failing a contradiction of the good news there will be a procession through the streets to-night, followed by a public meeting in School of Arts."

The Lithgow Mercury editor informed readers that any news concerning the relief of Mafeking which may come to hand after they had gone to press in the evening would be displayed on the board in front of the Mercury office, which he intended to hang a lamp on so notices would be lit up for the purpose.



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The name Blackman has a great association with the central of New South Wales and the family were true pioneers in many areas.

John Blackman was born in 1795 at Woolwich, a town south east of London, in Kent, England, though it later became part of the London. Later in 1801, when John was just six, the Blackman family emigrated on the ship 'Canada'. The family had been sponsored and highly recommended by the British Colonial Office.

He had two elder brothers Samuel and James, younger brother William, George and Robert as well as younger sisters Elizabeth, Mary-Anne, Henrietta and baby girl Martha.

After their arrival in Sydney his father, aged 40, decided to settle at Mulgrave Place on the Hawkesbury. John successfully applied for and was granted 100 acres at Mulgrave Place in 1802, calling it 'Rosedale'. He later married 29 year old Elizabeth Morris on 1st November, 1824, at Castlereagh and though they had no children they did adopt Phoebe Peacock.

John Blackman has quite a relationship with the Lithgow district as he built one of the inns which was part of a convenient series of taverns constructed by private individuals on the road from Emu Ford through to Bathurst on the coach route. He named his the 'Australian Arms Inn' after it was finished. It had been constructed over several years from 1856 to 1859. He had purchased land from William Dwyer who had



John Blackman

The single storey impressive inn was assembled from dressed local stone with a shingle roof and boasted ten rooms, all with cedar mouldings as was common at the time. The bar would have quenched the thirst of parched passengers as they hosted travellers who stopped for meals and an overnight stay. For the cold wintery nights there were four fireplaces in the building. As with a majority of inns the hostellery also had a cellar underneath the structure. The kitchen was a separate building away from the main inn but still connected by a covered way. Meals were served up in the dining room which was also situated in the separate kitchen building which had been constructed from bricks. Stables, complete with a coach house, were constructed at the rear of the inn for the convenience of patrons and there was an area fenced off for men travelling with flocks of sheep or herds of cattle. Wagoners were also catered for with their oxen or draught horses.

John Blackman also owned ‘Nugal’, a property near Coonamble on the Castlereagh River.

On 1st October, 1858, John Blackman and George Lee were sureties for William Corderoy who was appointed postmaster of the Bowenfels Post Office. Williams's salary was just £20 per annum.

John Blackman died on 21st November, 1860, and was buried at Rosedale in Lithgow.

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THE EIGHT HOUR COMMITTEE ORGANISES LITHGOW DEMONSTRATION



In late September 1900 the Lithgow Eight Hour Committee was progressing with arrangements for Lithgow's first demonstration and parade.

The executive committee of the Eight Hour Committee met in the miners' rooms in the Oddfellows' Hall with an excellent attendance, some 16 members being present. Mr. John Thurwell presided, and an apology was received from Mr. E. Aubrey, whose work took him out of town. The names of Messrs H. Brooks and F. Roby were added to the committee.

Correspondence from Mr. Joseph Cook, M.L.A., re the proclamation of a general holiday for Lithgow and surrounding districts, was read. The letters stated that Mr. Cook, in accordance with the request of the committee, would be most happy to endeavour to secure Monday, the 22nd of October, as a public holiday for Lithgow and the immediate districts, and that the Principal Under-Secretary (Mr. Critchett Walker) would proclaim the date mentioned a public holiday on Tuesday, the 25th instant. A telegram to this effect was also received from Mr. Walker. The intimation was received with applause.

The canvassing committee showed that funds had been subscribed right liberally and the total amount in cash, donations, trophies, and promises, approaches £30. Various sub-committees were formed with the following appointed Messrs. G.H. Yates, H.W. Langford, J. Summons, H. Brooks, A. Luchetti, W. Loneragan, E. Aubrey and A.T. Richardson.

The secretaries were instructed to communicate with the Railway Commissioners re the granting of cheap fares and special train arrangements for the day of the

demonstration. The selection of a procession committee was next dealt with when Messrs. W. Slattery, Wilkins, A. Fox; J. Thirlwell, G.H. Yates and F. Drewett were appointed to make all necessary arrangements for this portion of the day's programme.

It was decided to invite the following Ministers and M.P.s to be present: - Sir Wm. Lyne (Premier), Messrs. O'Sullivan, Fegan, Cook, Fitzpatrick, Young, Hurley, Lees, Crick, Ferguson, McGowen, and Sleath. Also Messrs. Thrower (Secretary Sydney Society), A.J. Hurford (secretary Bathurst Society), the secretary Newcastle Society, and the Mayor of Lithgow.

Sub-committees were appointed to wait in company upon the managers and employers of labour at the various local industries. On the motion of Mr. Slattery it was decided to submit the publican's booth, refreshment booth and fruit stall to auction. It was further decided that a concert and dance be held at night in the Oddfellows' Hall. After authorising the secretaries to secure the Agricultural ground as early as possible and to insert a preliminary advertisement in the local press the meeting adjourned after the sub-committees had arranged their nights of meeting. The general committee was to meet on Tuesday night.

In mid-October a general meeting of the committee was held in the miners' rooms, when there was an attendance of eighteen members, Mr. E. Aubrey presiding to finalise arrangements. The minutes of the last meeting having been read and confirmed, correspondence was read from the following: The Minister for Works (the Hon. E. W. O'Sullivan), regretting that, owing to pressure of public business, he would be precluded from attending the demonstration. Mr. J. Cook, M.P., stated that he would have much pleasure in being present and wished the movement the success it justly merited.

From Mr. Thos. H. Thrower, secretary of Sydney Eight Hour Committee, intimating that Mr. T. B. Talbot would represent the committee at the local demonstration. Also that the metropolitan eight-hour banner would be lent for the occasion.

From Mr. Thos. Wilton, to the effect that so far as the Lithgow and Hermitage collieries were concerned the holiday could be given to the men, but as every hour was a consideration in the erection of the new kilns, there would be some difficulty in the workmen engaged there getting away. He would, however, see what could be done, in this respect, when he comes to Lithgow at the week end.

Mr. Woodrow's letter stated that he had forwarded the committee's request to arrange for a holiday at the kerosene refinery, Hartley Vale, to his board, and would at once communicating their decision.

Mr. W.J. Ladkin, Portland, enclosing £2 collected from the employees of the New Zealand Trust Co.'s works.

Matters of detail were dealt with and the various positions appointed for carrying out the day's programme. The procession sub-committee reported that the whole of the storekeepers and other business people in town had decided to observe the holiday and that many of them intended to take part in the procession. The managers of Lithgow, Hermitage, Zigzag, Vale of Clwydd, and Oakey Park collieries had kindly arranged the working of their respective pits so that the employees could enjoy the holiday on Monday. The pottery employees were also participating in the demonstration. Given propitious weather organisers expected to see one of the biggest demonstrations ever held in Lithgow.



Mr. A.J. Hurford, secretary of the Bathurst Eight Hour Society organised the banner (above) for one of the twelve or fifteen different trades in the procession that would form up at ten o'clock, at the Oddfellows' Hall. Mr. J. Summons was appointed marshal and the line of march was to move down Mort Street, up Main Street and on to the showground.

The Minister for Mines, the Hon. J. L. Fegan, Messrs. T.C.L. Fitzpatrick, J. Cook, R. Sleath, W.F. Hurley, M's.P., were to be at the luncheon. Some uncommon events were introduced such as climbing the greasy pole, the mountain run and the bucket of water race. At night there would be a grand social in the School of Arts, for which every provision had been made on a big scale.

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DID YOU KNOW!

after a number of letters had been sent to the Lithgow Council, as well as to Aldermen, in April 1900 a pipe culvert was being laid down along the lane running parallel with Main and Mort Streets and just at

the back of the Lithgow Mercury newspaper office in March 1900. As this was one of the unhealthiest places in town, the work was an invaluable improvement.

a weatherboard cottage in Mort Street, Lithgow, with four rooms, kitchen and a 39 feet frontage was sold in October 1900 for £282 or \$564.

the new School of Arts building was built in 1906 and 1907 on land donated by Mr. William Sandford. The committee invited him to lay the foundation stone. It was later enlarged to accommodate Lithgow's increasing population and included a library, two offices, card playing room, meeting room, reading room as well as a billiard room.

many of the Lithgow district's early settlers were Scottish, just like Governor Macquarie, whose stimulus was keenly felt in the settlements in the many valleys west of the Blue Mountains.

the Hartley Valley near Lithgow was originally named The Vale of Clwydd by Governor Lachlan Macquarie during his first visit over the Blue Mountains after William Cox completed the road through to Bathurst.

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