

A suggested history of Tasmanian Aboriginal

KANGAROO SKIN OR SINEW, HUMAN BONE OR SKIN, SHELL,
FEATHER, APPLE SEED AND WOMBAT CLAW NECKLACES

Indigenous Tasmanians are famous for necklaces strung with tiny, lustrous shells. John Hawkins reviews their history, and proposes a new theory that Tasmanian Aborigines created these necklaces as a result of being given strings of glass beads at Adventure Bay by James Cook in 1777.

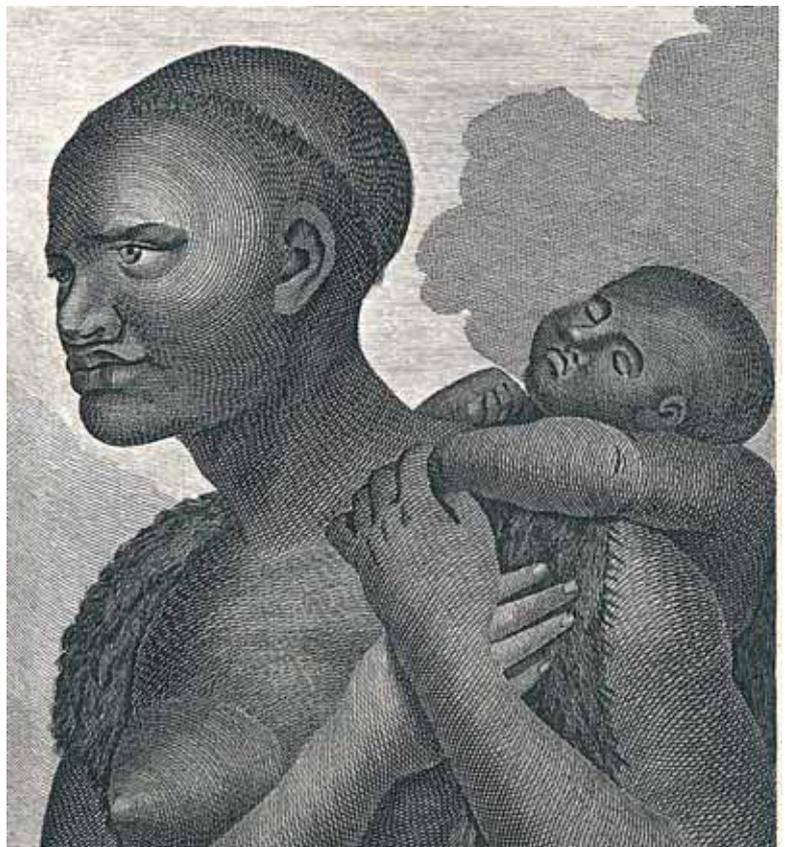
John Hawkins

Tasmania, through its original Aboriginal population and their descendants, has a tradition of necklace production, a tradition that I suggest in part stems from Captain Cook's distribution of glass bead necklaces at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island in 1777;¹ a moment captured by an unknown, contemporary artist.² Cook notes, 'Some of the group wore loose round their necks three or four folds of small cord, made of the fur of some animal; and others of them had a narrow slip of kangaroo skin tied round their ancles [sic].'³ In his Journal of 28

January 1777, Cook observes that the Bruny Island men were 'quite naked and wore no ornaments except large punctures or ridges raised on the skin.'⁴ Cook states that some of the women 'had all the upper part of the head shaven close, leaving a circle of hair all round' (plate 1).

From the few descriptions or depictions of Tasmanian Aborigines taken at the point of European contact and published in the voyage records of Furneaux (1773), Cook (1777), Bligh (1788 & 1792), Bass & Flinders (1798-99), Bruny D'Entrecasteaux (1793) and Baudin (1802), only one artist depicted a Tasmanian Aboriginal wearing a necklace. This portrait, drawn by Baudin's artist

Plate 1. A woman of New Holland, engraving taken from a pencil drawing, signed J. Webber, 1777. 'But in this they differed from the men, that though their hair was one of the same colour and texture, some of them had their heads completely shorn or shaved; in others this operation had been performed only on one side, while the rest of them had all the upper part of the head shorn close, leaving a circle of hair all round ... The head as is the custom with some Fryers (Friars)' Cook, *Journals* III, 1967, p. 55, 29 Jan 1777. This is the first representation by a European of a Tasmanian woman with shaved hair, presumably by flint or singed by fire to leave a decorative circle just above the ears. Webber's two known pencil drawings of individual men shows them bearded, with unshaven hair and no necklaces. Captain Cook gave the natives 'a string of Beads and a Medal which I thought they received with some satisfaction.' Original print, J B Hawkins Antiques



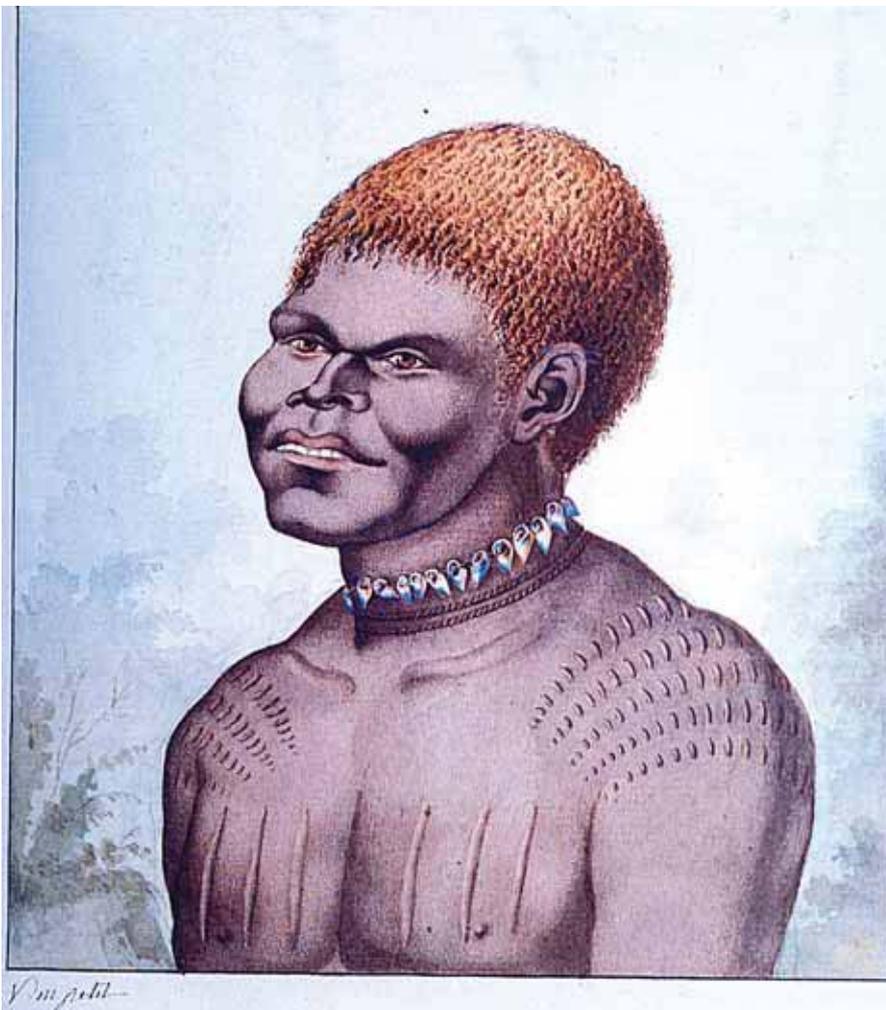


Plate 1B. Petit's original watercolour at Le Havre, 20019.2. This was produced for the engraver from a pencil drawing (20019.1) Bara-Orou is shown wearing a *Phasianella* (whelk) shell necklace, so tightly fitted around the neck that it must be knotted at the rear, hence not easily removed and with its pointed ends most uncomfortable. It may be that only larger shells such as these could be pierced until the arrival of European glass or metal to facilitate the smooth interior boring of smaller shells. If not smooth they will cut through plaited thymi thread. He also wears a traditional kangaroo sinew/skin plaited necklace. Péron makes no mention of a necklace in his text but it is shown in the finished watercolour (Le Havre 20019.2).

Nicolas Petit in 1802, shows a male, though there is no evidence of a beard but his hair is ochered, the Maria Island Aborigine, Bara-Orou (plate 1B). Around his neck he wears a single string, large whelk shell necklace and, below, a plaited two-strand necklace of an unknown material but probably kangaroo skin or tail sinew.

I suggest that it is possible to trace an evolution of necklace placement on the body between the visits of Cook (1777) and Baudin (1802).

The French Government sent an expedition to Australia and the South Pacific in 1791 to search for the missing French explorer La Pérouse, while undertaking an extensive program of scientific work. Bruny D'Entrecasteaux led the expedition, and various

expedition members made individual statements regarding their time spent in the southeast of Tasmania, between Bruny Island and the Mainland, during January and February 1793.⁵

D'Entrecasteaux's captain on the *Recherche*, Alexandre D'Auribeau, relates that 'one of the men ... presented me [with] a long strip of kangaroo skin which he wore as a belt around his loins. This strip is so skilfully cut that there are no noticeable curves in its entire length which is sixteen feet.⁶ I was a few paces from the shore and there set up the little store of objects intended for them. The bracelets and necklets of glass beads pleased them greatly, but they preferred to wear them around their head.'⁷

The expedition's botanist Jacques-Julien Labillardière reports⁸

One of them had the generosity to give me some small whelks perforated near the middle and strung on a cord: this ornament, which he called a 'canlaride' was the only one that he possessed; he wore it round his head: a handkerchief replaced this present, and gratified the wishes of the savage, who advanced that I might bind it round his head ... the women, even, where in general entirely naked, like the men; some of them only had their shoulders and part of their back covered with a kangaroo's skin, the hair of which was next to the flesh ... another had for her whole clothing, a strip of kangaroo's skin, half a decimetre in breadth, which was rolled six or seven times round her middle; another wore a collar of skin; some of the rest had their heads bound with several turns of a rather small cord. I afterwards discovered that these cords were mostly made with the bark of a shrub of the family thymi.⁹

A further account is given by Du Portail, a junior officer on the *Espérance*, who kept a journal:

Before we gave them glasses, medals etc they had an idea of finery, for besides tattooing the body and the layer of crushed charcoal with which they dirty their face, some of them had around their head strips of kangaroo skin and chaplets of 'Cantharides' (shells). The women had no ornaments and except for one whose face had a light colouring of red there was no evidence among them that art had been summoned to aid nature.

In a later letter, to his possible fiancée or girlfriend, he slightly expands on this statement¹⁰

...however some of them wore round their heads a little garland of those shells called 'Cantharides' ... when at their previous meetings we had offered the women some necklaces and other

adornments they adorned their children with them and had no wish at all to keep anything for themselves. ¹¹

The vocabularies compiled by these Frenchmen¹² refer only to a 'wreath of shells' (this being a translation from the French 'couronne de coquillages') as a 'canlaride' [Labillardière] or 'cantharides' [Du Portail] in the Tasmanian language – the spellings written as heard.

Between the arrival of Cook in 1777 and D'Entrecasteaux 15 years later, I suggest that the concept of wearing a necklace around the neck had not been taken up within the Aboriginal coastal community, but that Cook's 'circle of hair' cut into a woman's head had translated to a wreath of shells on a man's head, possibly as a result of European influence.

Women, being both carriers of children on their backs and providers of food obtained by sea diving, were surely prevented from wearing such decorative items; as a result, their hair was still being shaved in the traditional way as delineated by Piron, the expedition artist, in a drawing detail (partially lost by the engraver) of a similar view in Labillardière's published account (plate 1A). ¹³

Nine years later on, between 13 January and 27 February 1802, the Baudin expedition successfully explored the southern part of the east coast of Tasmania. Baudin's journal¹⁴ relates the following regarding necklaces, gifts and trinkets.

13 January 1802

When Mr. Freycinet left, I gave him mirrors, glass beads, snuff-boxes, hatchets, knives, etc., etc., etc., and recommended him to be sparing and impartial in any distributions of them that he might make.... As soon as they came up, Mr. Leschenault took them by the hand, embraced them and gave them some presents.... Sometimes they talked amongst themselves, sometimes they sang. One of them was wearing a necklace of fairly well-polished shells which he gave to him ... Most of the things that we carried appeared to attract them greatly, and they would

Plate 1A. Two details of women's hair taken from a photograph of a published Piron drawing, 'The Aboriginals at Black Swan Lagoon', drawn 10 February 1793. Note the shaved ring of hair and no necklace, for with a child on her shoulders any female would vouch for its impracticality. The original drawing is in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris



have been very pleased by our giving them our clothes. These men were naked from head to foot ... A second group of six or seven natives passed us. They, also, had been communicating with the men left in charge of the boats and were returning with their presents, which they carried hanging around their necks. One had a jacket given him by a sailor, another a piece of flag, etc., etc. Amongst this last group, two were remarkable for the elegance of their dress. One wore the skin of a kangaroo, or some other animal, which covered his shoulders and his chest right down to his navel. On his head he appeared to be wearing a sort of wig-shaped cap which, for a long time, we thought to be made of seaweed. Upon examining it more closely, however, we realised that it was his own hair. Divided into small strips about 2" wide and 1" long, and smoothed down with grease and reddish-brown dirt, it formed a skull-cap over his head. And every movement he made caused it to shake in a different way. The other native, who was quite naked, simply had his head shaved and wore a long strip of hair wound round it... *15 January 1802* ...the natives, all told, numbered more than fifty. A great fire was lit, and upon their all collecting around it, they were asked to sit down. This they did immediately, and excellent relations continued between them and the oarsmen. Our artist took advantage of this occasion to draw

several of the natives...but he did not manage to obtain any drawings of the women and children, for they could not stay still for more than a moment. The men were more docile, however, and he succeeded easily in capturing their expressions ... One of our sailors exchanged his jacket for a kangaroo-skin. The native tied it around his neck and went off a little way. His principal concern was to remove all the buttons, and then he abandoned the jacket...Of these, they all appear to be very fond.

Citizen Bonnefoi gave a woman a small mirror in return for her necklace. The locket on it consisted of an English penny and a metal button, but nobody could discover when she had acquired them...With everyone sitting down again, they turned their attention to pockets and the metal buttons on some of the men's waistcoats. Several did not ask before searching through them for things they might fancy, while others indicated by unambiguous signs how pleased they would be to own the buttons. Some were cut off and distributed amongst them to their great satisfaction...'

30 January 1802

I had provided myself with a few presents, so I held up some necklaces of sparkling beads, which drew their attention. One of them signalled me to give them to him, but I made a sign to him ... Captain Hamelin wanted to exchange something for one of their spears. He proposed the deal by signs that were well understood,

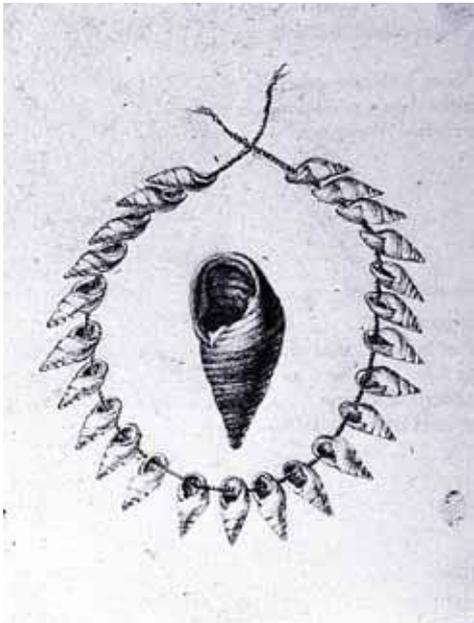


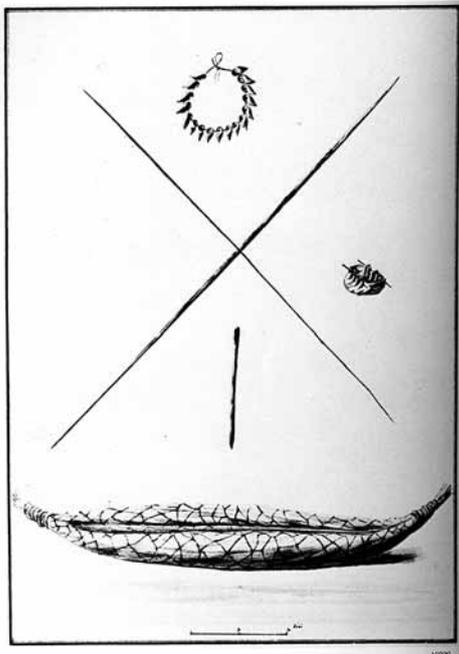
Plate 1C. Close inspection of the surviving material by Leseur¹⁵ gives four possible illustrations of one shell necklace/headband – or are they two different necklaces/headbands? One has 15 shells, the other 24 providing for two illustrations for each. The tying material would appear to be Thymi and not sinew or skin.

Top left: The original pencil drawing

Top right: The engraved Collier de Coquillages with 24 shells derived from the pencil drawing

Below left: The pencil drawing with knotted 15 shell necklace

Below right: The original watercolour with a 15 shell necklace but the knot undone



and it was agreed that they would hand over a spear in return for a uniform button. The agreement concluded, one of them went and fetched the weapon and relinquished it upon receiving the settled price... The negotiations finished, the natives stood off a little from us, as if afraid that we might use against them the arms that they had just sold us. However, upon seeing that we were heading back to our boats, they followed us again. Citizen Petit, who had done a drawing of one of them, had the paper snatched away from him, but being as alert as the one who had taken it, he snatched it back again and we continued towards the shore...

Particular Remarks concerning our sojourn in D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the southern part of Van Diemen's Land and our stay at Maria Island

...Although we saw some with their shoulders and chest covered by a kangaroo skin, the men are more generally naked. However, women that we saw wore skins. These seem to be intended principally to form a sort of bag, in which they place what they are given or what they gather when out walking ... Of the various objects that we distributed amongst them, glass beads, smallwares etc., the buttons off our clothes appeared to give them most pleasure ... Later on, the jackets were found. The buttons, which were blackened bone and not metal, had disappeared...

I presented one of them with a small mirror, but it did not produce the

Left: Plate 1D. Engraving of Grou-Agara, after a pencil and ink sketch by Petit, which I suggest was done on the spot (Le Havre 2008.2). The shaven head with a ring of hair indicates a more practical and permanent form of hair decoration than a shell 'couronne de coquillages.' The small number of contemporary illustrations show men ochred their hair or cut to a band, while women also cut their hair to a band, but wear no ochre





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effect that I expected for after looking at herself for a moment, she handed [it] on to another who made no use of it at all. These beauties, as well as the men, had their faces variously smeared, either with ground charcoal or with a type of dark red ochre. They painted in the same way several of the scientists, who good-naturedly tolerated this whim of theirs. The ceremony greatly amused the spectators and brought loud bursts of laughter from the natives...

Concerning Maria Island and the bay known as Marion Bay

...On the first day of our going ashore we communicated with the natives of the island. There were twenty-three of them: men, women and children...The natives appeared much stronger and more robust than those of D'Entrecasteaux Channel or Bruny Island. They are taller and better looking ...There is no doubt that they are the same peoples, as much by reason of their language as their customs ...(They) had the same desire for our bottles, glass-beads and buttons etc. However, they hesitated a long time before exchanging their spears ... The natives here did not seem to have been visited often by Europeans and, unlike the Bruny Islanders had no European objects in their possession ... [The European visitors would have been sealers who had been in Sydney since 1788, some 14 years] The people appear to have no knowledge of iron and its usefulness. They did not attach the slightest importance to the nails that

we wanted to give them and returned them to us as serving no purpose...

Baudin makes no mention of Bara-Orou or necklaces.

On 22 February 1802, Petit, Peron and a sailor Rouget went ashore at Maria Island, where they were met by a group of fourteen natives. Peron states: 'I set myself to studying them closely. Most of them were young men of around 16 to 25 years; two or three appeared to be of 30-35 years old. Just one, older than all of them, seemed to me to be from 50-55 years of age. He had a kangaroo skin over his shoulder; the others were completely naked.... Only one of them had his hair powdered with red ochre: he was a young man of 24 to 25 years named Bara-Orou.' Peron also makes no mention of him wearing a necklace.

Peron had made a special effort to comprehend the local language and produced a dictionary of 74 recorded words, compiled by Louis Freycinet. There is no Aboriginal word recorded for shell or necklace but, interestingly, there is a word for a glass bead.

Peron continues: 'three men had been showered with gifts from us, mirrors, knives, glass beads, handkerchiefs, snuff boxes etc....we had indulged their every desire and whim without requiring anything in return for all or presents.'¹⁶

Right: Plate 5: Timmy wears both a kangaroo sinew and plaited jawbone necklace. The Oxford portrait inscription 'Timmy/Native of George's River'; and the additional notes are - 'jawbone - md to Jenny - about 19 native of Cape Portland - travelled with Mr Robinson'

From left to right: Plates 2-9 are from a duplicate set of watercolours by Thomas Bock held in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. In Hobart, Bock painted the Aborigines who accompanied G.A. Robinson from Bruny Island on his expeditions of conciliation c. 1839. This set was painted for Sir John and Lady Franklin from Robinson's originals. These details show how necklaces were worn

Plate 2. Jenny wearing a feather or fur necklace, of which none are known to survive. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jenny/Wife of Timmy/Native of Port Sorell'; that in Captain A.W.F. Fuller's collection 'Jenny/Native of Port Sorrell/Van Diemen's Land', and also signed 'T. Bock delt.' The notes on the Oxford portrait are - 'about 20 - rather facetious and loquacious. no children. don't live very amicable.' As a female she wears no ochre in her hair

Plate 3. Woureddy wearing a kangaroo sinew necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Woureddy/Native of Bruny Island', and that at the Royal Anthropological Institute 'Woureddy/Native of Bruny Island/Van Diemen's Land.' Painted c. December 1829

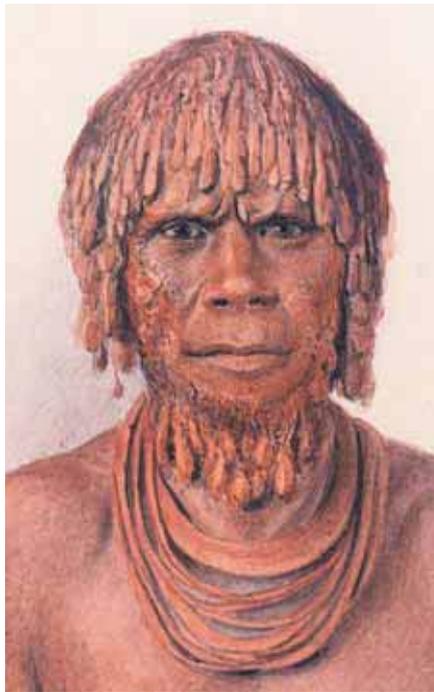
Plate 4: Truggernana [Trucanini] wearing a kangaroo sinew necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Truggerana/Native of the southern part of Van Diemen's Land.' The portrait in the Tasmanian Museum has a similar inscription. The notes on the Oxford portrait read: 'Lalla Rookh. wife of Woureddi aged 27. partl. good. saved Mr R's life at Arthur river by pulling log/ 2 spars/ of wood across river on which Mr R. was.' This portrait by Thomas Bock is possibly c. 1829, the earliest known image of this iconic figure, wearing only a sinew necklace. Not with the additional shell necklace depicted in the Law plaster cast. As a female she wears no ochre in her hair



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Above left to right:

Plate 6. Larretong wearing a feather or fur necklace with bound breasts. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'The Widow of a Chief and Native of Cape Grim' It notes 'dead about 3 years – mother of Adolphus, named Larretong. She never had any communication with Europeans till went to Flinders.' This and Plate 3 are the only Bock illustrations of Aboriginals wearing feather or fur necklaces. The Oxford set of portraits is a copy for the Franklins of Robinson's original set; I suggest that Thomas Bock was unsure of the material and painted it more fur like than feathers. Painted c. 1832/3. She wears no ochre in her hair

Plate 7. Manalargenna. Four examples of this portrait are known. The Royal Anthropological Institute has two, one is signed 'T. BOCK' in capitals, and has associated with it a handwritten note, 'Mr Hobson of Hobart Town, gave me this drawing of Manalargenna on May 18th 1837. He told me that he had hunted with him often, and that this was a very good likeness. It was taken from life. The artist is a German.' The one at Oxford inscribed 'Manalargenna/ A Chief of the Eastern Coast of Van Diemen's Land'; another in the Tasmanian Museum signed T Bock has a similar inscription. Notes on the Oxford portrait read 'dead – a powerful chieftain & considered a sage – sinews of kangaroo tail spun into cord around his neck.' This appears to be cut sinew of different thicknesses

Plate 8. Jack's wife/Fanny/Wortabowigee, wearing both a kangaroo sinew necklace (possibly plaited) and a many-stranded small shell necklace. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jack's wife/Native of Port Dalrymple'; and the portrait in the Royal Anthropological Institute has 'Wortabowigee/Native of Port Dalrymple/Van Diemen's Land.' The Oxford portrait has the additional note 'Fanny aged 30 rather well disposed, but rather petulant.' The sinew necklace looks correct and natural, the shell necklace appears to have various sized shells in the stringing. In the bush, this necklace must have been difficult to wear and keep undamaged. It is the only shell necklace depicted in this series of Bock watercolour portraits. Port Dalrymple in the Tamar Estuary (present day Launceston) was in close contact with the sealers in the Bass Strait islands, which may account for her wearing a multi type shell necklace. As a female she wears no ochre in her hair

These interesting entries intimate that, as with Labillardière, it was a man who wore the necklace of polished shells. The original drawings and watercolours from the voyage survive in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle at Le Havre.¹⁷ The necklace around the neck of Bara-Orou, as shown in the published print, is taken from a drawing¹⁸ and a finished watercolour¹⁹ (plate 1B) by Petit. This necklace may have been added to the

portrait later, for it is likely that the necklace illustrated is that given to Leschenault, and was probably worn on the head of an unknown Aboriginal man as the fifteen-shell length which appears to be knotted at the end and this does not permit passing over the head. (plate 1C) In the watercolour (plate 1B), the subject is depicted as a hairless young man, yet Peron gives Bara-Orou an age of 24-25 years.

At this date, to make shell necklaces a proximity to the sea would have been a pre-requisite and the indigenous people who inhabited the islands of Maria or Bruny Island, off the South East coast of Tasmania, are the likely innovators of this tradition. Islander Aboriginals gained their food from the sea by diving, and not fishing with a line or net.²⁰ Threading a necklace requires the use of a threading medium and, I suggest, due to the thickness of the threading material, thymi cord sinew or skin the Bara-Orou 'Collier de Coquillages'²¹, requires the use of a large shell.

I further suggest that the practice of wearing a shell necklace around the neck was a concept spread via sealers' women and inter-tribal visits, and by 1810 had become established in a limited way around the islands of Tasmania.

By 1810 female Aboriginals were at even greater risk of kidnap and enslavement by European sealers, who then took them to the larger uninhabited sealing islands, such as Flinders and Cape Barren in the Furneaux Group²² in Bass Strait²³. The children of these unions were, I suggest, the conduit through which the concept of shell necklace making gained continuity. Through the sealers, the women would have gained access to cotton thread thus enabling the shell size used for necklace making to become smaller, as the threading medium became thinner,

stronger and more readily available.

G.A. Robinson was appointed by Governor Arthur to gather up the remainder of Tasmania's indigenous population and settle them on one of the islands in the Furneaux Group. This task Robinson accomplished and duly recorded in his detailed published diaries²⁴ between 1830 and 1834, and on Flinders Island between 1834 and 1839,²⁵ prior to leaving with some 15 Tasmanian Aborigines to become Protector of Aborigines at Port Phillip. References to the subject of necklaces in Robinson's diaries follow.

On 21 June 1830,²⁶ Robinson was on Robbins Island, off the North West coast, adjacent to the Van Diemen's Land Company grant at Woolnorth. Peopled by sealers with Aboriginal 'wives', the sealers' women 'presented me with several necklaces made of shells, and I in return gave them beads, pin cushions, buttons etc.' Here Robinson implies a distinction between beads and shells. Buttons without a needle and thread would be useless. Needles can also be kept in pin cushions, a possible reason for their inclusion in his gift.

On 12 August²⁷ Robinson was inland with Hellyer, the Van Diemen's Land Company surveyor, where the natives 'had strung on the sinews of the kangaroo for ornaments'. It would seem from this reference, that shells were not used inland, just the sinew of the kangaroo tail, presumably plaited and possibly, by 1830, in the manner of sailor's, sealer's or stockman's rope or whip work.

By 12 November 1830,²⁸ Robinson had reached the Furneaux Islands where he removed two Aboriginal women, Smoker and Isaac, from sealers on Gun Carriage Island, just north of Cape Barren Island. 'Those women were some time ere they could believe they were to be emancipated. It appeared like a dream to them.... They gave me eight strings of beads made by the black women what the Ty Ree Lore call Mair Ree Ner.' Robinson specifically uses the word beads not shells, yet the word 'Mair Ree Ner' is an Aboriginal word associated with shells.

On 6 November 1831,²⁹ whilst with

Captain Clark near Bothwell in central Tasmania, Robinson received from Clark 'a plaited necklace of kangaroo sinew' along with a spear and a waddy. This specific reference to plaiting is of interest.

By 22 June 1832, Robinson was back on the North West coast of Tasmania when he refers, without the use of an Aboriginal word, to 'small shells to make necklaces'. Access to the material resources of the Van Diemen's Land Company may account for this specific reference to small shells.

On 18 May 1833,³⁰ on the South West coast, Robinson had an unnamed Aborigine attached to his mission who 'had on her neck a thick cord made out of the skin of an Aborigine and which she wore round her neck as a necklace. This was used by her as a charm. This is customary with the natives of the east and north parts of the Island. This was Karn Ne Bungeer.' This is the only reference to a human skin necklace that I have traced in contemporary Tasmanian literature.

When Robinson died in London in 1866, his widow sold his collection of Tasmanian artefacts, including the original Thomas Bock Aboriginal watercolours painted for Robinson between 1831 and 1834, while he was working with the Bruny Island Aborigines, and now in the Museum of Mankind, London. The collection was sold for £30 to Barnard Davis, who had previously collated and listed the collection.³¹ I have extracted the Tasmanian Aboriginal necklaces noted in the Davis listing:

- 3 human lower jaws of Tasmanians with native cord wrapped round them. These were worn round the necks of the natives as amulets.³² (plate 5)
- 2 human tibiae of Tasmanians prepared in the same way for wearing.
- 2 plaster busts of Tasmanians by B Law, Hobart Town. The man is the bust of Woreddy, a native of Bruny Island. The woman is Trugernanna, native of Sullivan Cove. [They are probably not

based on the Bock watercolours commissioned by Robinson, for both wear shell necklaces.]

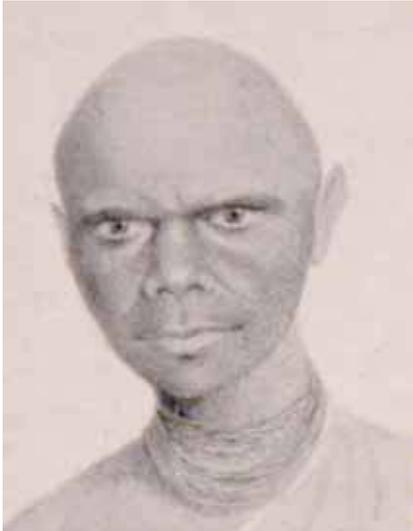
- A necklace of six strands, feather (plates 3 & 6)
- Another with more slender strands
- 1 necklace made of sinew (plates 2, 4, 7, 9 & 10)
- 1 finely prepared thick sinew rolled up into perhaps an amulet
- 2 amulets made of the cremated bones of the dead. V.D.L. Roydeener or Numremureker
- An amulet consisting of the bones of a child tied up in a little grass bag. 2 femora, 2 ulnae and the bones of one hand. (In skull case)
- 2 human ribs, clean. For a charm or ornament.
- About twenty string necklaces made of native string [possibly sinew? If so possibly those now in the Museum of Victoria]
- A quantity of prepared sinew
- Box of worsted and other work done by the women, Tasmanian, at Flinders Island.
- Small amulet. Seems to contain bone.

The items listed above show that Robinson's interest was in pure native work, as depicted by Thomas Bock in his watercolours (plates 2-9), and not shell necklaces. This list provides the only tangible reference to the existence of feather necklaces, although feather necklaces may feature in the portraits of Jenny (plate 3) and Larretong (plate 6) by Bock. Ling Roth³³ also refers to a '...love of arrangement was displayed in the flowers and feathers with which the heads of both sexes were generally found to be attired.'

The recent publication highlighting the treasures contained in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, features a wombat claw necklace on its cover. Collected by George Augustus Robinson, c. 1839, it bears a 19th-century tag giving it his provenance. A claw necklace is not listed in the Robinson Collection acquired by Barnard Davis, detailed above, and it is more likely that



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this object was collected by Robinson in Victoria after he left Flinders Island in 1839. However, another wombat claw necklace has recently surfaced in Hobart, so a Tasmanian provenance cannot be ruled out. The fine, thin animal sinew threading of this necklace is of great importance, if a Tasmanian provenance can be proved by DNA testing.

When Backhouse and Walker³⁴ visited Flinders Island, in their capacity as members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1832, Backhouse made note in his journal of the wearing and production of necklaces: 'Many of them have their necks ornamented by strings of beads or by shells hung on kangaroo sinews or by kangaroo sinews smeared with red ochre and grease and wound around others. (plate 4). By this means they form very neat brown necklaces. The shells they clean of the outer coat by stringing them on kangaroo sinew and exposing them to the action of smoke and grass with a few hot embers under it.'³⁵

Backhouse draws a distinction between a string of beads and a string of shells. The use of kangaroo tail sinews, greased and wound round others, again smacks of rope or knotwork, perhaps an inheritance from the time spent by some of these women as sealers 'wives'.³⁶ 'They

From top:
Plate 9. Jemmy/Jimmy/Problatena, wearing a tightly strung sinew necklace presumably tied with a knot when wound on. It may or may not be plaited. The Oxford portrait is inscribed 'Jemmy/Native of Hampshire Hills' and bears further notation 'same as the grey bust', so far not identified

Plate 10. The British Museum has two portraits by Thomas Bock, or copied from his work, of unknown men wearing kangaroo sinew necklaces. Neither appear to be plaited. British Museum, London

Plate 11. Charles Alfred Woolley (1834–1922), *Bessy Clarke*, 1866, original albumen photograph. Captioned in pencil 'Bessy Clarke or Pinnabathac Kangaroo Head, 50 years old, Macquarie Harbour.' A fine long Elenchus shell necklace, colour unknown. Courtesy Tim McCormick from original photograph in his possession

wear necklaces formed of kangaroo sinews rolled in red ochre, and also others of small spiral shells. They likewise wear the bones of deceased relatives around their necks, perhaps more as token of affection than for ornament...The shells for necklaces are of a brilliant pearly blue: they are perforated by means of the eye-teeth, and are strung on a kangaroo sinew; they are then exposed to the action of pyroligneous acid, in the smoke of brushwood covered up with grass; and in this smoke they are turned and rubbed till the external coat comes off, after which they are polished with oil obtained from the penguin or the mutton-bird.³⁷ It is not clear from this whether the eye tooth is animal or human!

Backhouse continues, 'One couple in the settlement lost a child some time since and its skull is still frequently to be seen suspended on the breast of its father or mother. Others wear jaw (plate 5) or leg bones, but these are usually strapped closely with kangaroo sinew rolled in red ochre and grease, so that only the ends by which they are suspended are seen, and these are bright, either being polished, or by long wearing.' This is a traditional form of Aboriginal necklace and, as such, was collected by Europeans.³⁸ He continues 'The Aborigines are careful of their clothing ...as they have no closets or boxes wherein they can preserve those articles, which, with a clasp knife, a few strips of beads, and a handkerchief or two constitute their personal property.' Backhouse is specific that the Aborigines treasured the European strings of beads and handkerchiefs but makes no mention of shell necklaces.

A year later, in November 1833, Backhouse and Walker on board the *Shamrock*, visited Flinders Island again, bringing a further 15 Aborigines. Backhouse records his purchases from the female Aborigines in the community³⁹, 'after breakfast... We purchased many shell necklaces off them for cotton handkerchiefs which several women immediately set about to hem.' If these women could hem a handkerchief, they must have had access to needles and

Right: Plate 12. Charles Alfred Woolley (1834–1922), *Trugannini* c. 1866. Albumen print, cabinet, enlarged from carte – de-visite. This historic portrait of the ‘last of the Tasmanian Aborigines’ was originally taken by Charles Woolley, a Hobart photographer. It was later sent to the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866 by the Commissioners for Tasmania and exhibited under the title ‘*Lallah Rookh, Truganini (Seaweed)*’ (cat . 544). The accompanying description noted that the subject was then about 65 years old and belonged to the Bruni [sic] Island tribe. She is shown wearing a large shell Hobart necklace. Four other Aboriginal portraits by Woolley were shown at the exhibition together with the important lithograph, Governor Davey’s Proclamation to the Aborigines, 1816. Thomas Bock and Benjamin Duterreau both painted her portrait and in 1836, she sat for a plaster bust modelled by the sculptor Benjamin Law. Trugannini died in Hobart on 8 May 1876. This version was subsequently enlarged and published by Wilmot’s Premier Studio, Malop Street, Geelong, but failed to acknowledge Woolley as photographer. It also appears in J.W. Beattie’s album of *Photographs of Tasmanian Aborigines* (Mitchell Library, Sydney) stamped with his own label. Original photograph JB Hawkins Antiques

Below: Plate 13. Frederick Frith, *The Last of the Tasmanian Aborigines*, contemporary photograph, Hobart, c. 1875, and a variation on the well-known view held by the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart. The sitters have been moved in order and the photograph hand coloured. It is possible that they have reverted to wearing shells in their hair, as couronne or crown, for this special photograph. Courtesy Jane Lennon Antiques, Hobart



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thread and, hence, an ability to thread a small shell necklace.

In fact, G.A. Robinson refers in his 10 December 1835 journal entry to his visit to the school on Flinders Island to teach native women, ‘who were 8 in number’, to sew.⁴⁰ On a later visit in August 1838, Robinson lists 19 sewn items manufactured by the Aboriginal women in their own time, without European supervision.⁴¹ These women, with their needlework skills, provide the key to the continuation of necklace-making in the islands off Tasmania.⁴²

In January 1834, as part of his Friendly Mission, G.A. Robinson visited Patterdale Farm, the home of John Glover, with Aboriginal trackers and guides. Glover’s recently published sketchbook⁴³ records a series of 20 detailed portrait sketches, in which only one man is shown wearing a necklace, and this is plaited. The Aborigines depicted seem to have lost the sense of pride in their personal appearance evidenced in the drawings of Piron, Petit or Bock, and an overall sense of sadness permeates Glover’s rendition.

Strangely, little detailed official information remains in the Tasmanian State Archives relating to the last phase of survival of the indigenous people after their return to Van Diemen’s Land from the Flinders Island Reserve. The most intimate and revealing descriptions are found in the writings of James Bonwick and J.E. Calder, both prominent

members of the community.⁴⁴ Together with G.W. Walker and James Backhouse, they did much to record the actual relationships between the Aborigines and the settlers. All four had first-hand acquaintance with the establishments at Flinders Island and Oyster Cove, and a study of their writings is essential to understanding the events of the subsequent two decades, which saw the ‘extinction’ of the indigenous population on mainland Tasmania by 1876.

In December 1847, a group of 44 full and half blood Aborigines from Flinders Island arrived at the 1,000 acre Oyster Cove Reserve, south of Hobart.⁴⁵ Under

the direction of Dr J. Milligan, the group comprised 14 adult males, 22 adult females with three boys and five girls.⁴⁶

James Bonwick states⁴⁷ that one of the children was Fanny Cochrane. Born in 1834 to a full blood Aboriginal girl called Tare Noo Tair Er, her father was possibly the sealer John Smith. Cochrane remained with the other Aborigines after the move to Oyster Cove but, in July 1854, she married William Smith, a splitter and sawyer. Cochrane was awarded a £24 a year pension, in lieu of her maintenance at the Cove, and moved out to live with Smith at North-West Bay, producing eleven healthy children.



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Plate 14. A selection of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces, J B Hawkins Antiques
 1. Marineer shell necklace, c. 1880
 2: Contemporary rice & marineer shell necklace made on Flinders Island, 2004

Plate 14A. Crossover shell and apple seed necklaces, J B Hawkins Antiques
 1. Whelk and apple seed necklace, c. 1950
 2. Shell and apple seed necklace, c. 1960
 3. Shell and various seeds necklace, c. 1940?

Plate 14B. Apple and other seed necklaces, classic examples of Depression jewellery, Tasmanian c. 1930. J B Hawkins Antiques



15 groupings describing various forms of necklace. Eight word groupings refer to words describing sinew necklaces and five word groupings to a necklace, trinkets or beads. He lists only two words specifically correlating to shell necklaces. One I have already noted is 'Canlaride', the Aboriginal word for a 'couronne de coquillages', the second is the word 'Marthinna' as recorded by the Quaker missionary, James Backhouse, who was at Flinders Island between October and November 1832, and again in December and January 1833/4.

Backhouse assembled his information about the Aboriginal language in the following manner:

Several of the Aborigines were invited into the Commandant's hut for the purpose of enabling me to take down

Her half sister, Mary-Ann, married Walter Arthur, and Bonwick observed them together.

I have elsewhere described the gift of some Flinders Island diamonds from poor Walter. I was to receive a parting remembrance from his wife. He had given me what was most valuable in his eyes. She presented me with what was pleasing in hers. It was a charming necklace of the smallest and most brilliantly polished shells I have ever seen. Even then I felt the delicacy of her nature, as she said putting the glittering object in my hand: 'Give that to your daughter'. I

thanked her, and inquired if my lassie should wear it as a necklace.

The Aboriginal word variously phonetically heard as 'Marthinna', 'Merena', 'Mirana', 'Mirina', 'Mereener' or 'Mair Ree Ner', applies to the shells used in necklaces. A search of dictionary sources relating to Tasmanian Aboriginal languages or dialects confirms that this was one of two recorded words relating to the shells used in the necklace itself.⁴⁸

N.J.B. Plomley's *Word List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages* notes the original sources tapped for Aboriginal words. For words associated with necklace, he gives

a few words as specimens of the language, which I had already commenced doing. The plan I adopted was to point to different objects, which they named, several repeating the word, for my better information. At a subsequent period, I uttered the words in the hearing of others with whom I had no communication on the subject of their language; if these understood my expressions, and pointed to the object the word was intended to represent, I took for granted that I had ascertained with tolerable accuracy the word used by them for that purpose.

From this I think it fair to assume that he pointed to a shell necklace and 'Marthinna' was the word that he noted. These are the only times an Aboriginal word for a necklace of shells appears in the record. Was it the word for the shell or the necklace? We cannot now tell. Against this, it should be noted that G.A. Robinson gives 16 Aboriginal words for necklace, yet not one of these words specifically describes a shell necklace. Ten different words relate to kangaroo sinew necklaces, three words to bead necklaces and two words to a necklace of no specified type. From 1829, Robinson had close contact with the Tasmanian Aborigines, and I suggest that both parties used the English words 'shell necklace', thereby confirming them as European in concept.

This may be confirmed by the writings of Dr Joseph Milligan, who arrived in Tasmania in 1831 as a medical officer in the service of the Van Diemen's Land Company. In February 1844, he became Surgeon-Superintendent at Flinders Island for a period in excess of two years. In January 1856, Milligan wrote to the Colonial Secretary with regard to the publication of his *Vocabulary of the Aborigines of Tasmania*, which was published in 1857. Milligan lists some 870 meanings for Aboriginal words in his vocabulary but not one word for necklace, shell or otherwise. Considering Milligan had exhibited Tasmanian shell necklaces at the 1851 Exhibition in

London, this must be considered remarkable and, I suggest, further confirms an English word usage. Bearing in mind the frequency with which the subject crops up, either in terms of construction, trade, or barter, the virtual non-use of an Aboriginal word to describe a series of shells strung together (be these as a necklace or a crown of shells) confirms that the tradition of necklace-making does not predate Cook's distribution of bead necklaces at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island in 1777.

The Westlake Papers⁴⁹ are a record of interviews taken in the 20th century between Ernest Westlake and those who had knowledge of the 'last' of the Tasmanian Aborigines, either by descent or personal contact. From these notes, I have extracted Westlake's observations on the history of necklace-making among Tasmanian Aborigines and their descendants.

Mrs Benbow, born 9 November 1843, aged 66 when interviewed on the 27 January 1897 had seen the natives at Oyster Cove...she was about 4 years old when they arrived...had a photo of Aborigines...put shells [for necklaces] in vinegar all night; rub in fat and then a blackwood (ping brush or dog tree) which gives a very fine ground charcoal. Would make a hole in shell with anything sharp pointed. Merena the blue shells for necklets.⁵⁰

Westlake visited Flinders Island where he interviewed Mr and Mrs Alfred Collis, a farmer and his wife. From 1871, Alfred's father, Henry, had been a schoolmaster on Badger Island.⁵¹ His wife noted, 'Necklaces? -preparation of Marina shells by half castes, pick off weed one by one and let flies blow them and maggots eat the fish out, clean with spirit of salts, pierce with awl, some half castes pierce with teeth.'⁵²

Truganini is mentioned as piercing shells with her front tooth. 'Trug would make holes in shells with her front tooth to thread them - only saw Trug do this - tooth may have been peculiar.'⁵³ Backhouse also noted the use of teeth for piercing shells so, although this sounds improbable,

it must be considered a possibility.

John Cook, Inspector of Police in Hobart, told Westlake that Truganini had given a necklace to Mrs Robinson⁵⁴, and one which had belonged to Queen Flora was given to Mrs Meredith. Mrs Meredith also described shell necklaces:

A pretty little white Columbella, common here, used to be much collected by the female aborigines, for making necklaces; some of which were several yards long, formed of these little shells neatly bored, and strung closely on kangaroo sinews, and were worn by their sable owners twisted many times round the neck, and hanging low over the breast.⁵⁵

Miss Maynard, probably a daughter of the sealer John Maynard, was interviewed on Flinders Island by Westlake: 'Her father was then aged 76 and his daughter's age was not given. The daughter, a half caste recalled that a Werener [was a] large Trochus & [a] mariner green small ones, used for necklaces, large ones are called King Mariners used for watch chains and hat pins.'⁵⁶

Tasmanian Aboriginal material was shown in London at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Four Aboriginal items are mentioned in the exhibition catalogue, of which 'Exhibit Number 194' is described as:

Necklaces of shells as worn by the aborigines of Tasmania. The shell composing these necklaces seems to be closely allied to the Phasianella. It is very abundant in the various bays and sinuosities of the island. It possesses a nacreous brilliant lustre, which is disclosed by the removal of the cuticle and this the Aborigines effect by soaking in vinegar and using friction. Various tints black, blue and green are afterwards given by boiling with tea charcoal etc.⁵⁷

This source, seemingly unquoted in full previously, indicates the Europeanisation of shell necklace manufacture on Flinders Island.

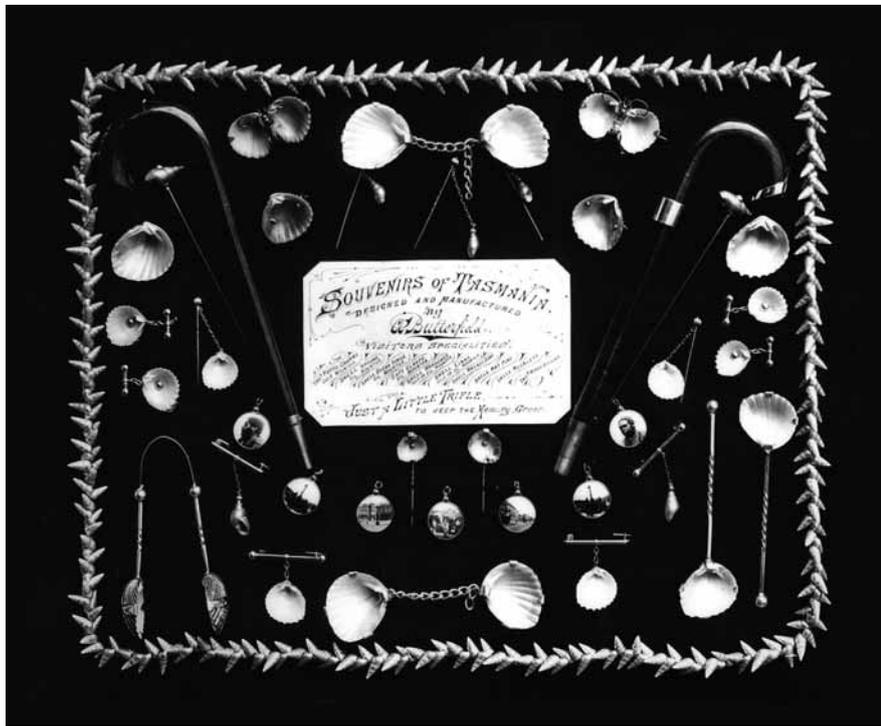


Plate 15: This collage of objects, advertised by Butterfield of Hobart, c. 1910, links together a Hobart shell necklace, depictions of the last of the Tasmanian Aborigines and European gold mounted charms, single shell tie pins, hatpins and brooches. JB Hawkins Antiques photographic library

The Tasmanian apple evaporating and drying industry resulted from an outbreak of Black Spot in the Huon Valley orchards, south of Hobart, in the 1890s. Due to their poor appearance, the apples could no longer be exported as fresh eating apples, yet they still ate well. By 1908, the Huon apple factories had introduced the American Kilner Evaporator, which revolutionised the industry by increasing the production of dried apples through a high degree of mechanisation. This process of mechanisation included coring the apple, providing a ready source of seeds for use in place mats or necklaces which required a considerable quantity of pips.

It is possible that this art form was employed as a method of raising money for women of Aboriginal descent in the Huon Valley, who had no access to shells but possessed the tradition of necklace-making. A peak period of production seems to have been between 1930 and 1960, and I suggest that the earliest pip necklaces were threaded onto cotton which broke easily. The introduction of nylon in the 1940s provided a far more durable thread for stringing, and many of these necklaces survive (plate 14A&B).

Appendix A: Surviving 19th-century Tasmanian Aboriginal necklaces:

Most of the surviving Aboriginal necklaces with 19th-century provenance are to be found in British collections. N.J.B. Plomley states that necklets said to have been made by the Tasmanian Aborigines are fairly common in British collections: 'Most of them are strings of small shells; and in all those seen the shells are strung on a machine-twisted thread, which may either signify restringing, or that they were made after European contacts had been made. Many of the latter must have been made by the captive Aborigines on Flinders Island.'

Dr Joseph Milligan was responsible for removing the Aborigines from Flinders Island to Oyster Cove in October 1847. As the exhibitor, the footnote to 'Exhibit Number 194' would have been supplied by Milligan himself. Vinegar, tea and charcoal, cited as being used in the production and colouring of necklaces, are European commodities. Ling Roth⁵⁸ records that Brough Smyth⁵⁹ had in his possession a necklace consisting of 565 *Elenchus bellulus* shells and 89 inches in length. In the Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, there are two necklaces; one of light coloured shells and the other of a dark lustrous green measuring 6 feet 4 inches doubled, ie. 12 feet 8 inches in length. These extremely long necklaces were apparently exclusive to Hobart.

G.A. Robinson did not round up all the Aboriginal women living with sealers on the islands to the north of Tasmania. Various writers have documented the sealers and their wives, recording their names and family connections.⁶⁰ On 15 October 1847, when the 44 full and half blood Aborigines were removed from Wybalenna on Flinders Island to Oyster Cove, south of Hobart, the community was split into two distinct groups - the full blood population was now at Oyster Cove while their descendants remained on the islands to the North of Tasmania. Cape Barren Island had the largest group of Aboriginal women living with sealers

and the descendants of this community survive to the present day. In fact, at least two pure blood Aboriginal women died after Trucanini in 1876.⁶¹ The art of necklace making from small shells continues within that community to this day. (plate 14)

'Strings Across Time' was the pioneer exhibition curated by Glenda King at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston, in which 19th-century and modern Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces were displayed together. The 40 necklaces on show charted the evolution of this cultural practice with particular emphasis on the work of contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal women of Islander descent. The necklaces of Corrie Fullard, Lola Greeno, her mother Dulcie Greeno and Muriel Maynard are a testament to their skill and understanding of this complex art.

The tradition of necklace-making at Oyster Cove, in Southern Tasmania, appears to be centred around Fanny Cochrane Smith and her family. The 'Hobart' necklaces are long and made from larger shells (plate 15). Access to shells of a traditional type was difficult, and by 1910, the apple seed had supplanted the shell in necklace-making. The Tasman Peninsula and the Huon Valley apple industry virtually adjoin Oyster Cove and apple seed would have been in ready supply.⁶²

Plomley's listing follows.⁶³

British Museum

Ten necklets of shells in the collections. Two of these were presented by J. Edge-Partington and were obtained by him in Hobart; another was given by Dr Joseph Milligan in 1851. This may be one of the necklaces exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition by Milligan (Exhibit Number 194), others are marked as coming from Flinders Island.

Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford)

There are at least five necklets in this museum, four of which are strings of small shells.

The other necklet is labelled:- 'Necklet of native string worn by both sexes. Tasmanian aborigines; dd. Dr Barnard Davis 1868' [Presumably ex G.A. Robinson] This consists of several coils of string, the loops about 20cm long, several of them bound together here and there with a whipping of a 2-ply twist over a distance of about 1cm. This necklet has been illustrated by Ling Roth (1899, p. 131)

Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Cambridge)

A necklace of the shells of *Calliostoma* sp., about one metre in length overall, is labelled 'Tasmanian. Dr Webster. 1906'

Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Exeter)

A shell necklace and a bracelet in the collection is reputed to have belonged to Truganini (donor Miss C.E. Wright, 1905)

Royal Scottish Museum

Two Tasmanian shell necklets in the collections are labelled:

'Necklace of shells made by natives. Presented by the Tasmanian Commission, International Exhibitions 1862'

'Necklace of small shells (*Truncatella marginata*) and a few *Elenchus* shells strung on thread. Cape Barren Island, Bass Straits.'

Another necklace of *Elenchus* shells is labelled as Australian and thought to be Tasmanian.

Hunterian Museum (Glasgow)

There is one necklace of shells from the Bass Straits.

Fuller Collection (Chicago, USA)

One necklace obtained in Tasmania before 1834 by John Merrimen. This may be of kangaroo sinew as it is covered with a red incrustation. The principal source for red ochre in Tasmania is the Magog Range, north of Chudleigh, near Deloraine. This appears to be the only surviving Tasmanian ochre-coloured necklace.

Giglioli Collections, Museo Nazionale (Rome, Italy)

An unknown number of Tasmanian shell necklaces are held.

Museum of Victoria (Melbourne, Vic.)

Fifteen string bundles, which may or may not have been necklaces, have a G.A.

Robinson provenance but some of these may have been collected in Victoria.⁶⁴

Most appear to be 'Sinews from a Macropod tail, tip spun into string.', some are two ply, some three.

Queen Victoria Museum (Launceston, Tas.)

A coloured shell necklace, on display in the 'Strings Across Time' exhibition, has a G.A. Robinson provenance.

Appendix B: Shell Types.

An 1882 Royal Commission into Fisheries⁶⁵ provides relevant contemporary information about necklace-making but omits reference to the early shells of the *Phasianella australis* family which were depicted in the work of Petit and Leseur.

It may also be recorded here that for necklaces, ear pendants and other ornamental purposes, some of our shells are most highly prized. The following are largely collected and prepared by the half-castes on the Barren and Badger islands, and obtain fair prices, viz:-

Trigonia Margaretacea.....Pearly
Trigonia pendants and necklaces.
Elenchus badius }
" bellulus} Blue and
green pearly necklace shells.
" irisodontes}
" nitidulus.....}
Margarita Tasmanica}
Truncatella scalarina}
" Tasmanica}
" marginata}Rice-shell
necklaces

" micra}
Marinula pellucida..... Tooth
shell necklaces
Columbella semi-convexa}
" Lincolnensis}Oat-shell
necklaces
" irrorata}
Nerita atrata Rosary
shell necklaces and bracelets.

The black rosary shell necklaces became popular after the death of Prince Albert and later Queen Victoria, stimulating a demand for mourning jewellery.

Appendix C: List of items taken by the French for purposes of barter to the South Seas:

Nicholas Baudin's journal provides the following list of items carried by the French expedition in 1802 for barter in the South Seas. The items underlined (by me) have a particular association with the future creation of a necklace industry in a primitive society.

Articles for barter on the *Géographe*:
NB: a similar list is supplied for the *Naturaliste*

25 lengths of broad silk ribbon
silk ribbon
approx. 15 thousand assorted pins
approx. 15 thousand assorted needles
1,000 assorted fish-hooks
50 no. 1 combs
25 lengths narrow silk ribbon
50 lengths of broad cotton ribbon
50 lengths of narrow cotton ribbon
25 no. 2 combs
100 no. 3 combs
25 no. 4 combs
50lbs of Breton linen thread in bundles
50 ells of silver braid
50 ells of gold braid
25 ells of silver fringe
25 ells of gold fringe
25 ells of silver lace
25 ells of gold lace
100 assorted boxes
50 boxes covered in tin-plated iron
50 covered in box-wood
50 covered in metal
125 3 to 4 inch mirrors

125 German mirrors
 25 10-inch mirrors framed in painted wood
 150 papier mâché snuff-boxes
 50 plumes
 50 hinged snuff-boxes
 500 wooden-handled knives
 100 sheath-knives
 200 horn-handled knives
100 pairs of scissors
42 gross of buttons
1500 awls
300 awl-handles
 500 paint-brushes
 50 brushes
 100 pairs of coloured pearl earrings
100 coloured necklaces
 100 pairs of gilded filigree earrings
 100 pairs of expanding bracelets
 100 rings for feet
 500 rings for the fingers

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Mr Tony Brown, Curator of Indigenous Cultures at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, contests that Europeans were responsible for the introduction of the concept of a shell necklace into Tasmania. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery would not allow the use of their Alfred Bock watercolours.⁶⁶

Photographs of 19th-century Aborigines wearing shell necklaces have been obtained from other sources. My thanks to Mark Cabouret for providing the photograph of Truganini by H.H. Bailey; Jane Lennon, Hobart, for plate 13; and Tim McCormick for plate 11.

I look forward to a response to my article by the museum authorities, for it is only by the cut and thrust of debate that knowledge can be further enhanced.

NOTES

- 1 Cook distributed his Adventure Medal (one of which was discovered on the island in 1914) and glass bead necklaces, the small beads presumably threaded on cotton, to the Bruny Islanders.
- 2 James Cook, *Interview with the Natives in Adventure Bay, Bruny Island*. A contemporary drawing by an unknown artist. Library of the Naval Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, London. Illustrated Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, p. 52.
- 3 Third Voyage Bk. 1. ch. vi.
- 4 As shown in Webber's 1777 portrait,

- 'A Man of New Holland', depicted in the Cook *Atlas*.
- 5 Brian Plomley & Josiane Piard-Bernier. *The General, The Visits of the Expedition led by Bruny D'Entrecasteaux to Tasmanian Waters in 1792-3*, Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston 1993.
 - 6 *Ibid*, p 282.
 - 7 *Ibid*, p 285.
 - 8 *Ibid*, pp 288 & 289.
 - 9 Edward Duyker, *Citizen Labillardière*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne 2003. pp 110-111. Probably *Pimelea nivea* of the Thymelaceae family, sometimes called Bushman's Bootlace from the tough stringy bark which can be stripped from the branches, endemic to Tasmania.
 - 10 *Ibid*, p 338.
 - 11 *Ibid*, p 300.
 - 12 *Ibid*, p 317.
 - 13 *Atlas pour servir à la relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse* Paris, 2nd edition, 1817
 - 14 Christine Cornell, *The Journal of Post Captain Nicholas Baudin*, Adelaide, Libraries Board 1974.
 - 15 A pencil drawing by Lesueur (Le Havre 18010) probably done soon after the acquisition by Leschenault of a shell necklace. The drawing does not indicate any knots between the shells in the fibrous many-stranded threading material, the shells would therefore be likely to dethread. A finished watercolour, also by Lesueur on blue tinted paper (Le Havre 720590) illustrates one of these *Phasiarella* shells picked up at North-West Bay, an anchorage used by the expedition in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel SE Tasmania.
 - 16 *Voyage of Discovery to Southern Lands* by Francois Peron by Louis Freycinet, 2nd edition, 1824 translated from the French by Christine Cornell 2006, pp. 220-224.
 - 17 *Baudin in Australian Waters. The artwork of the French Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands 1800-1804*, edited by Bonnemans Forsyth and Bernard Smith. An illustrated descriptive catalogue of the drawings and paintings of Australian subjects; now held in the Lesueur Collection at the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle Le Havre. The relevant images to this paper are identified by number as used in this publication, p 120, plate 18010. A pencil drawing of a 24 shell necklace with thymi plaited thread drawn by C A Lesueur.
 - 18 *Ibid*, 20019.1, p 150.
 - 19 *Ibid*, 20019.2, p 151.
 - 20 Appearing not to eat scaled fish, only

- women dived for crustaceans, as a result they had neither discovered nor needed a fishing line.
- 21 *Ibid*, p 121, plate 18011. The number of shells shown as 15 with no knots.
 - 22 Bass and Flinders visited the Furneaux Island to rescue the survivors of the wrecked *Sydney Cove* in 1798. When they returned to Sydney they reported the presence of vast numbers of seals, thereby attracting large numbers of men and sealers to the islands, some of whom remained as residents.
 - 23 James E. Calder, (1875) *Some account ... Native Tribes of Tasmania* 1875, pp 92-103 describes from a contemporary source such an expedition.
 - 24 Interpreted superbly by N.J.B. Plomley, 1966 in his book *Friendly Mission. The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834*. Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart and its sequel *Weep in Silence*
 - 25 N.J.B Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, the sequel to *Friendly Mission* covering Flinders Island.
 - 26 N.J.B Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, p 181
 - 27 *ibid*, p 197
 - 28 *ibid*, p 272
 - 29 *ibid*, p 619
 - 30 *ibid*, p 722
 - 31 Plomley N.J.B. 'A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe' *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston*. New Series, No 15, 1962. Barnard Davis's collections were dispersed before and after his death in 1881. The skeletal material was bought by the Royal College of Surgeons in 1880, and his library was sold at Sotheby's in January/February 1883. What happened to the ethnographical collection has not been discovered. In a letter which he wrote afterwards to Mrs Robinson, Barnard Davis remarked that 'Dr Milligan has returned to England ... from what he tells me, it seems that almost all the objects I had from you are Australian and not Tasmanian, except the portraits. I always thought this was the case, because Mrs Robinson was disposed to confuse the two races together, and call the whole Australian.' (Letter dated 13 October 1867, in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.)
 - 32 N.J.B Plomley, 'Relics of the Dead', *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* 1962. A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe. The term 'relics of the dead' is used here as a designation for objects of human origin carried or used by the Tasmanians as

- mementoes of the dead, or as charms against or cures for sickness or injury. There seems to have been two varieties of these objects, (a) bones, fragments of bone or dried parts of the body which were either enclosed in a cover or, for example kangaroo skin, or tied round with a cord of sinew, by which they were also suspended, and (b) gatherings from cremation sites contained in a wrapping. Robinson's journal for 25 May 1838 refers to a native woman called 'Ellen' who wore 'an amulet a parcel of ashes hung round her throat to alleviate the pain.' Robinson had previously seen her with a human bone suspended on her back and had asked her for it, but was refused, Ellen pointing out that he already had one in his office. Ellen died on 13 June and Robinson might well have obtained the 'amulet' on 26 June. All Barnard Davis' bone 'relics' were bound with kangaroo sinew. The 'relics' used by the Aborigines at the Flinders Island settlement had either been brought there by them or were prepared at the settlement. Bundles of ashes, if they were to contain human material, could not have been prepared later than 17 October 1835 when Robinson arrived to take charge. The same would apply for most other types of 'relics', for after Robinson arrived all bodies were buried. Even in Robinson's time however, some 'relics' were prepared by mothers from the heads of their infants dying soon after birth.
- 33 *Aborigines of Tasmania*, 2nd edition, 1899, p. 131
- 34 James Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843
- 35 N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in Silence*.
- 36 *Thomas Bock: Convict Engraver, Society Portraitist Exhibition Catalogue*, 1991, p.36
- 37 James Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843, p.84.
- 38 GA Robinson, see list of his Collections, by Barnard Davis. This list does not include a shell necklace.
- 39 N.J.B. Plomley. *Weep in Silence*, p. 262
- 40 *ibid*, p. 317
- 41 *ibid*, p.750, see list of GA Robinson Collections by Barnard Davis, box of wasted and other work.'
- 42 Two of these women were Flora, Ben Lomond tribe, a sealer's woman, who lived with John Brown and Daphne, a Swan Port native.
- 43 John Glover, *The Van Diemen's Land Sketchbook*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart 2003, Folio 20.
- 44 James E. Calder, *Some Account of the Native Tribes of Tasmania*, 1875, pages 109-115.
- 45 W.E. Crowther, *The Final Phase of the Extinct Tasmanian Race, 1847-1876*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, No 49, 1972, p. 3. Oyster Cove Reserve and Elsewhere, December, 1847 - 6th July, 1855. Crowther's grandfather, W.L. Crowther, F.R.C.S. Eng. was the chief medical officer for Hobart and he was responsible for the removal of Lanney's head on his death, now believed to be in Edinburgh University. Lanney was the 'last' male Aboriginal in Tasmania.
- 46 Dr Joseph Milligan was appointed surgeon to the Van Diemen's Land Company in 1831 and was stationed on the North-West Coast, an appointment which gave him opportunities for observing the Aborigines. Milligan was for a brief period Superintendent at Flinders Island (appointed on 5 December 1843) and in October, 1847 he brought his charges to the Oyster Cove Reserve by the schooner *Sisters*. Dr Milligan was favourably known to Sir John Franklin, the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, who promptly selected him as Inspector of convict discipline and later Superintendent and Medical Officer of the Aborigines and Commandant of Flinders Island.
- 47 Quoted by Nicholas Cree in Oyster Cove as being taken from James Bonwick. *The Last of the Tasmanians*, 1870, chapters 8-19. *The Lost Tasmanian Race*, chapters 8-9.
- 48 N.J.B. Plomley, *A Word List of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*, necklace page 326.
- 49 The Westlake Papers, records of interviews in Tasmania by Ernest Westlake 1908 - 1910 edited by N.J.B. Plomley. Ernest Westlake was in Tasmania from December 1908 until June 1910, visiting many parts of the northern, eastern and southern regions and making a trip to the Furneaux Islands. During these excursions he interviewed several people of mixed blood, several old settlers who had known the Aborigines at Oyster Cove and a few whose parents and other relations had had contact with the Aboriginal people in the 1830s and 1840s. Westlake's enquiries from people in mainland Tasmania largely concerned the fullbloods removed to the Aboriginal settlement, originally located on Flinders Island but moved to Oyster Cove on D'Entrecasteaux Channel in November 1847. Although these fullbloods were some of the original Aboriginal people of Tasmania, the information about them which Westlake reported has the defect that it relates to people long dead, whereas the halfcastes of the Furneaux Islands (and their European associates) gave him information at first hand.
- 50 Westlake Papers, p.11.
- 51 Badger, as in Wombat so named by the sealers.
- 52 Live shell glistens, whereas the dead shell is dulled as found on the sea shore. Necklaces were made from shells gathered live.
- 53 Westlake papers, Mrs Nowell, page 46, daughter of J.S. Prout, the artist.
- 54 A shell necklace with a provenance to GA Robinson was exhibited at Launceston in the *Strings Across Time* exhibition at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery 2003/4.
- 55 Westlake Papers, Mrs Meredith, p. 146.
- 56 Westlake Papers, p.18.
- 57 *Great Exhibition 1851, Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, Part IV, Colonies and Foreign States Division I, Van Diemens Land Exhibit No 194, Milligan J., Argyll Street, Hobart Town. Necklaces of Shells as worn by the Aborigines of Tasmania. One of which is now in the British Museum.
- 58 H.Ling Roth, *The Aborigines of Tasmania*. 1st ed. 1890 & 2nd ed. 1899.
- 59 R. Brough Smyth, , *The Aborigines of Tasmania*, in *The Aborigines of Victoria*, vol 2 R. Brough Smyth, John Ferres, Govt. Printer, Melbourne, 1878.
- 60 Norman B Tindale, *Growth of a People: Formation and Development of a Hybrid Aboriginal and White Stock on the Islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania 1815-1849*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, 1949. Brian Plomley and Kirsten Anne Henley, 'The Sealers of Bass Strait and the Cape Barren Island Community', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Journal*, Vol 37, 1990.
- 61 *Weep in Silence*, p. 679
- 62 An apple coring machine in operation is illustrated in the *Tasmanian Mail*, 25/4/1912.
- 63 N.J.B. Plomley. *A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe*. Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. New Series, No.15, Published 1962, p.12.
- 64 Alan L. West. *Aboriginal String Bags Nets and Cordage*, published by Museum Victoria, 1999
- 65 Report No.132, Tasmanian House of Assembly. Fisheries of Tasmania: report of Royal Commission October 31, 1882
- 66 For a full history of these watercolours see N.J.B. Plomley, Records of the Queens Victoria Museum, Launceston. New Series No. 18, 1965. N.J.B. Plomley, *Thomas Bock's Portraits of Aborigines and Australiana* May 1992, pp.141-43