

BUNGAREE'S MOB

The Wannangine of the

Woy Woy Peninsula & beyond



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The Wannangine *of the*
Woy Woy Peninsula & beyond



Pearl Beach
Aboriginal
History Group

First edition published 2016

Published under the title 'The Garigal People of Pearl Beach and Patonga' by the Pearl Beach Aboriginal History Group; compiled by Dr Van Davy, Jeanette Sims and Justine O'Brien, with assistance from Jane Clarke, Faye Austin, Bob Pankhurst, and Tracey Howie, Chair of the Guringai Tribal Link Corporation and a descendant of Bungaree.

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By the Pearl Beach Aboriginal History Group; with further assistance from Peggy Todd, Dr Beverley Kingston, Dr Keith Vincent Smith, Laurie Allen, Kay Williams, Tim Selwyn, Bob Pankhurst, and Tracey Howie, Chair of the Guringai Tribal Link Corporation and a descendant of Bungaree.

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Front cover images (clockwise from top left) :

- 1.** 'Portrait of Bungaree a native of New South Wales, with Fort Macquarie, Sydney Harbour, in the background' by Augustus Earle c.1826. [Image: National Library of Australia]
- 2.** 'View in Broken Bay New South Wales March 1788' by William Bradley [Image: State Library of NSW]
- 3.** 'A Reconstruction of Procoptodon, a giant Kangaroo' [Image: Science Photo Library, Natural History Museum, London]
- 4.** 'King Bungaree, Chief of the Broken Bay Tribe, New South Wales' by Charles Rodius c.1834 [Image: Art Gallery of South Australia]
- 5.** An engraving by Samuel John Neele of James Grant's image of 'Pimbloy' is believed to be the only known depiction of Pemulwuy, the Aboriginal Warrior [Image: State Library NSW]
- 6.** Aboriginal Rock art at Bulgandry, Brisbane Water National Park [Image: www.sydneYROCKART.info/woy-woy]
- 7.** 'Fishing from Canoes' [Image: Manly Museum and Gallery]

*** In the title of this book 'Wannangine' means 'the saltwater people'**

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In the BEGINNING...

Recent archaeological discoveries have found evidence to suggest that Aboriginal people have been in Australia for at least 65,000 years ^[2]

Modern scientific methods, including DNA sequencing, radio-carbon dating, and more recent archaeological discoveries, have revolutionised theories concerning the origins of Australia's first people.

In July 1968, in an isolated area of NSW, burnt bones were unearthed by geologist Jim Bowler from the wind-swept sand dunes of a now dry pre-historic lake - Lake Mungo. Bowler and his colleagues named her 'Mungo Lady' and her bones are known to be approximately 40,000 to 42,000 years old. In the same area a male skeleton, 'Mungo Man', was discovered in 1974. Both skeletons share the same DNA of the earliest humans in Africa from 60,000 years ago, making them the oldest human remains found anywhere in Australia.^[1]

In 2017, archaeologists found the first evidence to suggest that Aboriginal people have been in Australia for at least 65,000 years ^[2] with the land being continuously occupied since then. Previous to this discovery the agreed established age was around 47,000 years. The first wave of people who entered Australia began their trek out of Africa between 80,000 and 100,000 years ago.

Qualification: The following account has been put together by the Pearl Beach Aboriginal History Group after researching all the available material we could find at the time of publication and consulting as widely as possible. This is our collective attempt to write a short history focussed on the Garigal people of the local Pearl Beach & Patonga area. It is as good an account as we can provide at the present time.

These people undertook the first major maritime migration in the world - they had to sail a minimum of 90 kilometres across open sea to reach their destination whatever route they took in their long journey out of Africa. No other humans had undertaken such a journey 65,000 years ago.

After crossing between islands, they could have walked the last stretch between Papua New Guinea and northern Australia because sea levels were so low at that time.^[2] They were then cut off from further outside contact by the rising seas as the Ice Age ended and the inland drying-out of the continent proceeded.

At this time the first Australians lived alongside many giant ‘mega-fauna’ species

There were giant versions of emu, kangaroo and wombat, a carnivorous goanna and many other giant birds, reptiles and mammals. They lived alongside these creatures for at least 20,000 years.^[2]

The drying out of the centre of the continent saw both the extinction of these giant beasts and the reduction of human habitation by around 60%. The people were forced to break into smaller bands and this, in association with their different geographical circumstances, produced small differences in their genetic profiles.

Isolated by the rising seas from the rest of the world, the people of hundreds of tribes learned to engage in many ways - trade, marriage, song-lines etc - and, as a consequence, managed to create and maintain genetic diversity.

20,000 years ago Pearl Beach and Patonga did not exist

This was the time of the last Ice Age and water levels were around 120 metres lower. The Pearl Beach area was just a small part of an escarpment, making up part of a valley wall of a river which ran to the sea 20 kilometres to the east.

Only with the gradual ending of the Ice Age and the slow melt of the vast ice sheets, starting about 19,000 years ago, did the ocean levels rise, resulting in flooded coastal plains where people could not live, and a plethora of bays, inlets, estuaries, swamps, lagoons, beaches and islands.^[3]

The ice sheets melted in a series of spurts over 12,000 years, causing several rapid sea level rises, beginning with a rise of 10-15 metres in less than 500 years.^[21] Coastal people, including those in Pearl Beach, would have been forced to move with this changing coastline, towards ever higher ground.



A reconstruction of Procoptodon

A giant short-faced kangaroo from the Late Pleistocene of Australia. It weighed 250kg and stood 2m tall, reaching up to 3m when standing and foraging for food.

[Image: Science Photo Library, Natural History Museum, London]