

## First Record of Painted Aboriginal Rock Art in a South-Western Australian Limestone Cave

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In November 1982 Mr M. Herne and other local amateur speleologists reported the discovery of two Aboriginal painted hand stencils at Old Kudardup cave some 6 km north-west of Augusta in the Cape Leeuwin-Cape Naturaliste region. (Western Australian Museum Aboriginal Sites Registration Number S1942; National Map 1:100 000 grid reference, Series R611, Sheet 1929 243 058). A Western Australian Museum party recorded and photographed the stencils in March 1983.

Old Kudardup is one of many limestone caves developed in the aeolian calcarenite which caps the Precambrian crystalline rocks of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste block (Lowry 1967). The cave is situated on a limestone ridge densely vegetated with acacia and casuarina thickets, patches of blackboy and low peppermint woodland. Westwards, coastal heath with intermittent patches of open peppermint woodland and closed scrub extends some 4 km to the sea (Beard 1981). The region is well-watered and the forest-heath environment would have provided numerous resources for Aboriginal hunter-gatherers (cf. Dortch 1979: 275).

The two stencils are located on the north wall of the cave, near the entrance, and at the top of a talus slope leading down to a large vaulted chamber some 200 m in diameter. The stencils are approximately 70 cm apart and situated about 2 m above the present surface of the slope. The wall of the stencils is undercut and extensively weathered, and neither of the stencils is very distinct. Both are of a human left hand, possibly of the same individual, and each is made in reddish-brown ochreous paint (Figure 1).

Several artefacts of Eocene fossiliferous chert collected from the floor of the main chamber provide the only other evidence for Aboriginal use of the cave. The presence of the chert suggests that the cave was known and visited by Aborigines some time prior to the Middle Holocene. At this time, sources of the stone, thought to be located on the continental shelf, would have been submerged by post-glacial sea level rise (Glover 1975; 1979; see also Ferguson 1980; Pearce 1977). A partially collapsed pit, dug by persons unknown, and located in the large lower chamber, extends to a depth of some 2 m and reveals a banded sandy deposit but no archaeological material. No other pits have been dug.

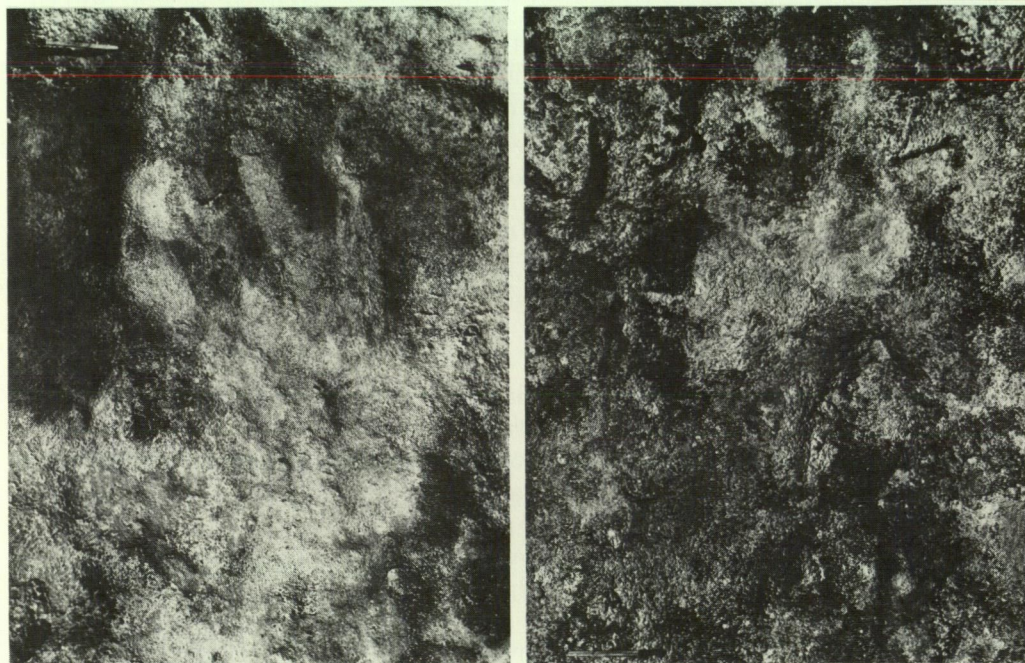
Old Kudardup adds to the half dozen caves in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste region known to contain archaeological material, the most noted being the late Pleistocene deposit at Devil's Lair (Dortch 1979 and refs.). It is unknown whether

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the stencils described here are contemporaneous with the fossiliferous chert artefacts. If they are, their probable Late Pleistocene to Middle Holocene age lends support to Maynard's proposal that stencils are used from an early phase in the development of Australian art (Maynard 1976).

The Old Kudardup hand stencils are the first known examples of painted rock art in a south-western Australian limestone cave, and are an important find as they occur in an area previously noted for its conspicuous lack of Aboriginal art sites (Crawford 1972; Davidson 1952; Hallam 1981; Merrilees *et al.* 1973; Serventy 1952). Nearly all of the very few known south-western art sites have been described or mentioned in publication. These include paintings in two granite rock shelters near York (Hallam 1975: 85, 94; Serventy 1952); enigmatic engraved markings in limestone in Orchestra Shell Cave north of Perth (Hallam 1974), and at Morfitt's Cave south of Mandurah (Dortch 1976: 41); at least two engraved or scratched limestone plaques from Devil's Lair (Dortch 1976), and the recently published animal track engravings on the Scott River near Augusta (Clarke 1983).



**Figure 1** Two Aboriginal painted hand stencils, Old Kudardup Cave, south-western Australia. The matchstick is 4 cm long. Photographed by Douglas Elford.

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# Guide to Authors

## Subject Matter

Reviews, observations and results of research into all branches of natural science and human studies will be considered for publication. However, emphasis is placed on studies pertaining to Western Australia. Full length papers should not normally exceed 30 typed pages. Short communications should not normally exceed three typed pages and this category of paper is intended to accommodate observations, results or new records of *significance*, that otherwise might not get into the literature, or for which there is a particular urgency for publication. All material must be original and not have been published elsewhere.

## Presentation

Authors are advised to follow the layout and style in the most recent issue of the *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* including headings, tables, illustrations and references.

The title should be concise, informative and contain key words necessary for retrieval by modern searching techniques. Names of new taxa must not be included. An abridged title (not exceeding 50 letter spaces) should be included for use as a running head.

An abstract must be given in full length papers but not short communications, summarizing the scope of the work and principal findings. It should normally not exceed 2% of the paper and should be suitable for reprinting in reference periodicals. Contrary to Recommendation 23 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature it may include names of new taxa.

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The International System of units should be used.

Numbers should be spelled out from one to nine in descriptive text; figures used for 10 or more. For associated groups, figures should be used consistently, e.g. 5 to 10, not five to 10.

Spelling should follow the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

Systematic papers must conform with the International Codes of Botanical and Zoological Nomenclature and, as far as possible, with their recommendations.

Synonymies should be given in the short form (taxon, author, date, page) and the full reference cited at the end of the paper.

## Manuscripts

The original and two copies of manuscripts and figures should be submitted to the Editorial Committee, c/- Publications Department, Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000. They must be in double-spaced typescript on A4 sheets. All margins should be at least 30 mm wide. Tables plus headings and legends to illustrations should be typed on separate pages. The desired positions for insertion of tables and illustrations in the text should be indicated in pencil. Tables should be numbered consecutively, have headings which make them understandable without reference to the text, and be referred to in the text.

High quality illustrations are required to size (13.5 cm x 18 cm) or no larger than 32 cm x 40 cm with sans serif lettering suitable for reduction to size. Photographs must be good quality black and white prints, 13 cm x 18 cm (5 inches x 7 inches). If scale line and lettering are required on photographs *do not* place directly on to print. They should be positioned on a clear paper or film overlay. Scale must be indicated on illustrations. All maps, line drawings, photographs and graphs, should be numbered in sequence and referred to as Figure/s in the text and captions. Each must have a brief, fully explanatory caption.

In papers dealing with historical subjects references may be cited as footnotes. In all other papers references must be cited in the text by author and date and all must be listed alphabetically at the end of the paper. The names of journals are abbreviated according to *World List of Scientific Periodicals*. The use of 'unpublished data' or 'personal communication' is discouraged.

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# CONTENTS

**Fain, A.**

A New Genus of Mite (Acari: Acaridae) Phoretic on Bees  
(*Ctenocolletes*) in Australia 77

**McNamara, K.J.**

Living Australian Species of the Echinoid *Pericosmus*  
(Spatangoida: Pericosmidae) 87

**Fain, A. and Friend, J.A.**

Two New Acarid Hypopi (Acari, Astigmata) from the  
Faeces of the Numbat *Myrmecobius fasciatus* Waterhouse  
(Marsupialia, Myrmecobiidae) 101

**Storr, G.M.**

Revision of the *Lerista nichollsi* Complex (Lacertilia:  
Scincidae) 109

**Flannery, T.F.**

Re-examination of the Quانبun Local Fauna, A Late  
Cenozoic Vertebrate Fauna from Western Australia 119

**Hutchins, J.B.**

Description of a New Gobiesocid Fish from South-Western  
Australia, with a Key to the Species of *Aspasmongaster* 129

**Houston, Terry F.**

Bionomics of a Pollen-collecting Wasp, *Paragia tricolor*  
(Hymenoptera: Vespidae: Masarinae), in Western Australia 141

**Houston, Terry F.**

Biological Observations of Bees in the Genus *Ctenocolletes*  
(Hymenoptera: Stenotritidae) 153

**Storr, G.M. and Harold, G.**

Herpetofauna of the Lake MacLeod Region, Western Australia 173

**Storr, G.M.**

A New *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia: Scincidae) from Western Australia 191

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

**Morse, Kate**

First Record of Painted Aboriginal Rock Art in a South-Western  
Australian Limestone Cave 197