

4 Bunjils Shelter, Black Range Scenic Reserve by Ian D. Clark

This chapter presents a detailed history of the Aboriginal art site known as Bunjils Shelter situated in the Black Range Scenic Reserve, near Stawell (see Fig.4.1). It is the only known site in Victoria to contain bichrome figures and an anthropomorphic figure whose identity is known. The existence of the art site had been rumoured among the European population since the 1850s, however its existence was first confirmed when Alfred William Howitt (1904) revealed its general location, from information he gained in the summer of 1883/84 from John Connolly, a Jardwadjali speaker he interviewed at Ramahyuck Aboriginal station. Although the location of the site did not become public knowledge until 1957, its location was known to a select group of local European people from at least 1911. The incidence of graffiti also dates from this time. The site is generally regarded to be one of the most significant of the 150 or so Aboriginal art sites in Victoria, and yet its management has been characterized by nagging doubts about its authenticity (see Clark, 2005).

4.1 First Phase: Sight Sacralization and Naming 1883–1957

In terms of MacCannell's (1976) modeling, the first phase in the development of attractions is 'sight sacralization' or 'naming'. During the summer of 1883-4, A.W. Howitt was collecting information for a book on the Aborigines of southeastern Australia and he visited Ramahyuck, at Lake Wellington, in Gippsland, to gather information from its Aboriginal residents (Pepper & De Araugo, 1985). Howitt subsequently published this book in 1904. In the intervening period, Maynard Ord (1896), a local journalist, published a history of Stawell, in which he stated that rumours had circulated since the early days of the goldfields in the mid-1850s that Aboriginal paintings existed in the Black Range near Stawell. He noted that many people had sought to locate them but had been unsuccessful.

Quite independently of the natural beauties of the miniature mountain, the Black Range basin and valleys have some local stories which are a little tinged with romance, and consequently with uncertainty, which latter quality is a parent of the former. In the early days of the goldfields settlement it was told that in some remote gorges of the Black Range there were mysterious caverns, approachable only by long labyrinth passages in which primitive drawings by an ancient and defunct peoples were existent, which were supposed to delineate the prowess of the earlier representatives of the black race long prior to the advent of European settlement and civilisation. It is still believed by some persons [in the 1890s] that such hidden caverns do exist and remain unexplored, but there seems little foundation for such a tradition. Yet the rumour circulated in the early days caused a good amount of exploration, both by boys and girls, who made sundry picnic excursions, and as these always resulted in joyousness of some kind or another, the pleasant theory has been preserved until the present day.

It was gratifying to think that by climbing over a ridge of rocks, and then descending into a ravine, you might discover some wonder of nature or of aboriginal history that had not been known to the civilised world before. It was also invigorating for the young people to have an excuse for these wanderings, in company, under a sunny sky, by a rippling stream, in a real garden of native ferneries and other congenial surroundings.

The caves with the reported drawings have never yet been discovered, but every exploration made by the most enterprising of the rising generation has revealed fresh beauties, both as regards vegetation and an unaccountable upheaval of granite, which has assumed the most grotesque and yet picturesque proportions (Ord, 1896:45).

From Ord's account it is evident that the search for the art site(s) in the Black Range was a precursor of the relationship between art site visitation and recreation. In this specific instance the fact that the location of the site was unknown added to the mystique associated with the Black Range.

In his 1904 publication Howitt divulged what he knew of Bunjil, and confirmed the existence of the art site in the Black Range near Stawell.

All that I know of the beliefs of the Mukjarawaint is that Bunjil was once a man who was the father of all the people, and that he was good and did no harm to anyone. I may mention here as in one sense belonging to this part of my subject, that one of the Mukjarawaint said that at one time there was a figure of Bunjil and his dog painted in a small cave behind a large rock in the Black Range near Stawell, but, I [Howitt] have not seen it, nor have I heard of anyone having seen it (Howitt, 1904:491).

Howitt's notes of his conversation with this Mukjarawaint (a variant of Jardwadjali) speaker are in the Howitt Papers in the State Library of Victoria. These papers were presented to the Library in 1972 by the Howitt family. Examination of these notes has uncovered some interesting material about the site and his informant—a man known as 'John Connolly'. He is also referred to as Johnny Connolly, and at times 'Connolly' is spelt Conolly. When interviewing Connolly, Howitt made the following notes.

Obtained the following information from Johnny Connolly, a half-caste native of the Mukjarawaint tribe. He was brought up by his maternal grandfather's brother until the age of [blank]. He subsequently was at the Lake Condah Mission. He speaks English thoroughly and with intelligence. I am a half caste my mother was never married to a blackfellow. She lived with a digger who found Pleasant Creek.

Connolly gave Howitt the following information on the art site we now know as 'Bunjils Shelter'.

Bunjil a man, supposed to be father of all the blacks a place at Pleasant Creek at Black Range—there is a rock with a large cave under it. Bunjil is painted in it and a little dog in each side. Road from Pleasant Creek to Campbells Reef—there is a boundary riders hut about half a mile ws/w from the well. The Black Range Hut. Hut close to road follow into Pleasant Creek. After leaving the hut mountains runs to point along side road. A little up the hill from the point 60-70 yds there

is a big round stone in a sort of hollow, the mouth of the cave faces towards the hill. Bunjil does no harm, I think he does good [Howitt Papers 1053/5 (c), Ms. 9356 SLV].

Campbell's Reef is to the west of present day Moyston (Smyth, 1869; Banfield, 1974). The locations of the boundary riders hut, called the Black Range Hut, and the well are yet to be determined.

A comparison of Howitt's notes with his 1904 publication reveals that his publication does not faithfully reproduce the information he obtained from John Connolly twenty years earlier. Unfortunately the discrepancies have had a considerable impact on the history of this site. With regard to location, Connolly gave Howitt clear instructions, yet Howitt chose not to publish them. Instead he only gave the site's general location in the Black Range near Stawell. Had Howitt chosen to publish the locational data the site would probably have become public knowledge in the early 1900s, and not in 1957.

Another major variation between Howitt's notes and his publication concerns the number of motifs at the site. Howitt (1904: 491) specifically stated the site contained the figure of 'Bunjil and his dog'; however, Howitt's notes are clear that two dogs were painted beside Bunjil. Howitt's published reference to only one dog has fuelled local speculation that some of the painting was done by Europeans; certainly the belief that the second dog was of European origin has been widespread (Massola, 1957; Halls, 1967; Banfield, 1974; Clark, 2005).

The most valuable aspect of having finally identified Howitt's Bunjil informant and having dated when the information was obtained is that it finally puts to rest any lingering doubt about the authenticity and Aboriginal origin of this art site. The discrepancies between Howitt's private notes and his published work could only become public knowledge when the notes were available to the general public in 1972. However the informant and the nature of the information were not uncovered until 1991 (Clark, 1991). Fortunately as part of the author's doctorate research I had read the Howitt Papers reasonably carefully, scrutinizing them for information on traditional spatial organization. Having established the identities and tribal affiliations of Howitt's informants from western Victoria, when I began to research the history of the management of this art site I was reasonably certain I knew the name of the Mukjarawaint informant. A quick look at the Howitt Papers in April 1991 uncovered the reference to the art site and confirmed that the informant was John Connolly.

In the absence of access to Howitt's private notes, the search for the art site continued after the publication of his 1904 ethnography. However, the confusion of having two Black Ranges in relatively close proximity on the east and west side of the Grampians, meant that the search was sometimes concentrated in the wrong mountain range. An example of this confusion is found in *The Ararat Advertiser* of 11 April 1929, where A.S. Kenyon, President of the Ethnological section of the Field Naturalists Club, Melbourne, and a former resident of Ararat, wrote 'Dr. A.W. Howitt was told by a black fellow at Tyers that in the Black Range, the range west of the Glenelg, there

was a cave with a painting of Baiamai, the Great Spirit. Search has been made for this without result’.

In January 1957 Aldo Massola corresponded with Ian McCann a member of the Stawell Field Naturalists Club, and told him that he had just come across another bit of information regarding the painted cave on the Black Range, and sent him the extract from Howitt (1904: 491). Clearly this correspondence suggests that McCann and Massola had written previously about this site. The site finally became public knowledge in 1957 largely through the efforts of Mrs. W.A. Collins, the Secretary of the Stawell Field Naturalist Club. After persistent enquiries, Collins ascertained that the location of the art site had been known to a select group of local residents since at least 1911. The precision of this date comes from graffiti painted on the wall of this site.

In 1911 the eleven year olds Eric Robson and Harry Stanton named this site ‘Mancave’. In 1957 Massola named it ‘Bunjil’s Cave’. Within the literature a range of names has appeared including: Blackfellows’ Cave; Bunjils Cave; ‘Bunjil Scenic Reserve’; ‘Bunjils Shelter’; Bunjil Aboriginal Art Site; Bunjil’s Rock’, ‘Bunjils Rock’; and ‘Bunjils’. The art site obviously takes its name from the spiritual being that is painted there. Generally the orthography of the name of this being is given as ‘Bunjil’, however other variants include Bungil, Pundjil (Thomas in Bride 1983), and Bundjil (Hercus, 1986) (for more information about Bunjil see the chapter on Lal Lal Falls in this book).

The 1990 initiative by the Koorie Tourism Unit of the Victorian Tourism Commission and the five Brambuk communities to restore indigenous place names also sought to change the names of all public art sites in the Grampians National Park (Clark & Harradine, 1990). It was believed by both parties that many existing art site names were culturally inappropriate, misleading and incorrect. For example many of the sites are called caves, when in fact they are rock shelters or rock overhangs. In the case of this art site, the submission did not include the eastern Black Range in its recommendations, essentially because the site had in part an appropriate Aboriginal name. Nevertheless, applying the same standards to this art would suggest that the name ‘Bunjils Cave’ is inadequate, because the site is not a cave but an alcove within a shelter. For these reasons the Brambuk Aboriginal community in 1990 resolved to call this site ‘Bunjils Shelter’. Occasionally ‘Bunjil Shelter’ is used.

4.2 Second Phase: Framing and Elevation 1957–Present

The second phase identified by MacCannell (1976) in the evolution of attractions is ‘framing and elevation’ which he argued results from an increase in visitation, when demand requires some form of management intervention, whereby the sight is displayed more prominently and framed off. In 1957 when this site was ‘discovered’ the National Museum of Victoria was responsible for administering Aboriginal sites. Aldo

Massola, as the Museum's 'Curator of Anthropology', became directly responsible for the management of the site. Massola was later replaced as Curator of Anthropology by A.L. West. As the art site is on Crown land, the Department of Crown Lands and Survey was the relevant land manager. Subsequent site works however were undertaken by the Stawell District of the Forests Commission of Victoria. The Museum continued to have responsibility for this site until the passage of the Archaeological and Aboriginal Preservation (AAP) Act in June 1972 saw the establishment of the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Office in February 1973. Under the Archaeological and Aboriginal Preservation Act 1972 an Honorary Warden scheme was established whereby local people were appointed in an honorary capacity to have responsibility for monitoring the condition of given archaeological sites. Elwyn Dennis, a local land holder, was made an honorary warden in late 1985.

The first formal inspection of the site was the 1957 inspection by members of the Stawell Field Naturalists Club and local residents. Collins was taken to the site by the Holmes brothers, Max and Jim, who lived a kilometre from the site, and had known of its existence since the 1930s. Collins subsequently notified Massola, who arranged an inspection. Massola was accompanied by Collins and McCann. Massola recorded and photographed the site and published the first illustrations and interpretation in the June 1957 edition of *The Victorian Naturalist* in an article titled 'Bunjil's Cave Found'. He recorded three motifs: the figure of Bunjil and two dogs.

4.2.1 Authentication: Aboriginal or European Origin?

Since this site was first reported in 1957 its authenticity has been questioned. One common view is that the motifs of Bunjil and the two dogs are 'fake', in that they were painted by European(s) and not Aborigines. Although Massola (1957) regarded the paintings to be of Aboriginal origin, he conceded that at first glance the figure of Bunjil does not appear to be genuine as it seems to be traced in white paint and is quite unlike the work of Aborigines.

In late 1976, VAS was asked by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey to make recommendations concerning the management of this art site. Coutts replied that as this site had not undergone close examination he was reluctant to offer any recommendations. He stated that tests were needed to ensure that the paintings were in fact genuine. On his part, he had some doubt of this. If subsequent examination proved the site was genuine Coutts stated he would recommend that the area be set aside as a Crown Land Reservation and be declared an Archaeological Area.¹¹ Thus the initial stimulus to substantiate authenticity came from a need to make recommendations concerning the management of the Crown Land. Continuing interest in the

¹¹ See Item 539/76 in VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt.1) 90/5788-1.

site made it necessary for management purposes to resolve the question of whether the paintings were of Aboriginal or European origin.

In 1983, F.E. Nikkelson, a Stawell resident, corresponded with R.G. Gunn, a local rock art specialist, on the question of the authenticity of this site. Nikkelson claimed that the motif of Bunjil had been drawn in the early 1950s by a little girl who lived in the area. The other person often credited with having painted the three motifs of Bunjil and the dogs is a person named Mary Campbell, who Gunn (1983a) describes as a local eccentric who lived a few kilometres south of the site, who was said to have painted the design after coming across a statue of Buddha in the bush.

Between 1979 and 1981, five separate sets of analyses were carried out on pigment samples collected from this art site. Analyses included Emission spectroscopy, X-ray fluorescence (XRF), Infra-red spectroscopy (IRS), X-ray diffraction (XRD), and Scanning electron microscopy (SEM). The final conclusion from this series of analyses was that the internal red and the white outlines of all three bichrome figures, i.e., Bunjil and both dogs had been painted using traditional Aboriginal ochres (kaolinite and iron-rich clay). Over painting of at least parts of the body of Bunjil and the second dog had occurred using a European whitewash and the red in the tail of the first dog has been added by Europeans using red lead paint probably at the same time as the 1911 graffiti was added. Essentially these results agreed with the most reliable information concerning European intervention at the site (McConnell, 1985).

In many respects the history of the authentication aspect of the management of this site has been embarrassing. Interpretation of the origin of the painting has been characterized by three views: a) that the paintings were Aboriginal in origin (Ord, 1986; Howitt, 1904); b) that some of the paintings have been added to and ‘touched up’ by Europeans (Massola, 1957; Banfield, 1974); and c) that the paintings have been entirely the work of Europeans (the belief of various local informants; Sullivan, 1979; and Coutts correspondence 1979). Sometime between 1979 and 1980 the site was struck from the VAS Site Register when the European view had become accepted within VAS. Despite the fact that in late 1981 SEM analysis had finally established the Aboriginal origin of the site, it was not restored to the Register until early 1983. The irony of all this is of course the knowledge that from 1972 when manuscript notes in the Howitt papers in the possession of the State Library of Victoria became available to the public they contained information that removes any doubt about the paintings’ authenticity. This is not to infer that pigment analysis was not necessary to determine which pigments were of a commercial origin, and were painted over non-European ochres, rather the argument is that the question of authenticity need never have become a management issue, and the impact of pigment sampling on the art site could have been minimized.

4.2.2 Management Plans and Recommendations

In March 1973, C.E. Middleton, the Secretary for Lands in the Department of Crown Lands and Survey, wrote to J. McNally, the Protector of Relics, in the National Museum of Victoria, regarding this art site. Middleton noted that the 'cave' containing Aboriginal paintings known as 'Bunjil's Cave' or 'Bunjil's Shelter' was located on an area of unalienated Crown Land. 'Arising from enquiries into other matters in the vicinity, the question has been raised as to whether a suitable area including the site of the cave should be formally reserved or other appropriate action taken with regard to control and/or management of the site'. McNally responded in March 1973 confirming that 'Bunjil's Cave' was an important Aboriginal art site situated in a picnic ground, and is to some extent protected at present by a large metal grating. Given the implementation of the Aboriginal and Archaeological Act 1972 McNally requested time to have the matter examined thoroughly before making any final decisions. Apparently nothing came of the 1973 correspondence for in December 1976 Middleton wrote to Coutts providing him with copies of this correspondence, stating that he would be pleased to receive any comments Coutts may wish to make in respect of the management of the site.¹²

In July 1982, Coutts, the Director of VAS wrote to G. Hollingsworth, the Manager of Crown Lands in the Horsham office of the Crown Lands Department informing him that Gunn's study of Bunjils Cave had been completed and that it was clear from his report that this site was probably one of the most important rock art sites in Victoria. For this reason the Director believed the site should be declared an Archaeological Area and be properly fenced and protected at the earliest possible time. In 1982 the Land Conservation Council (LCC) recommended that the Bunjils Cave allotment be classified as a Scenic Reserve (LCC, 1982).

In June 1984 J. Hanrahan, a consultant to the Australian Heritage Commission nominated this site for inclusion on the Register of the National Estate. Accordingly the Statement of Significance was that this site was considered to be the most important rock art site in the state because (a) Aboriginal interpretation of the art is available; (b) only known representation of Bunjil in Victoria; (c) doubtless religious significance and growing significance to local Aboriginal community; (d) rarity or uniqueness of use of colour, form, technique, size, shape; (e) good state of preservation; (f) rarity of location, i.e., singular and isolated; (g) established tourist attraction; (h) educational potential; and (i) possible association between shelter and scarred tree.

In August 1984 the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands released a draft management plan of management objectives and proposed works for the Reserve. The Region adopted many of the recommendations contained in Gunn's (1983b) report on this art site. The plan reported that the area around the art site,

¹² See item VAS Registry File Site No. 7423:001.

the walking tracks between the site and the car park, and the car park itself were badly eroded. Of the five management objectives one was to protect and preserve the Aboriginal art form known as Bunjils Cave. Several works were proposed including the closure and revegetating of the existing car park and the construction of a new car park; landscaping around the granite tor containing the art site to stabilize soil erosion; the removal of graffiti; the regular removal of rubbish and further graffiti as and when it occurred. Other desired works included the construction of a walking track from the new car park to the art site and to nearby scenic points; the production of a pamphlet for the reserve; the closure of the access route to the top of the granite tor housing the art site; the construction of an interpretive centre; and declaration of the art site as an Archaeological Area under the AAP Act of 1972.

In January 1986, the Horsham Region of CFL proposed five works for the reserve: realignment of the scenic walking track to include a scarred tree; upgrading of the walking track from the carpark to the site to reduce erosion and provide easier access; removal of graffiti; placing information sheets on the information board; preparing an information sheet for visitors to be distributed from an information box located next to the information board.

In August 1988 the Black Range Land Care Group met and discussed their concerns about certain aspects of the management of the reserve: they requested the removal of the barbecues and picnic tables as they considered they placed undue pressure on the site; and erosion of walking track was a problem. In response the Horsham Region of CFL proposed to discuss the removal of the picnic tables and fireplaces with the Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative and the Stawell and Grampians District Tourism Association. A management plan, or at least a management statement would be prepared and walking track signs were going to be removed so that the track could be rehabilitated. A work crew was in the process of upgrading the walk track to the art site. Accordingly in August 1988 the Horsham Region of CFL produced a draft Management statement for the Black Range Scenic Reserve.

In the first week of June 1990, a workshop on management of public art sites within the Grampians National Park was auspiced by VAS and held at Halls Gap. Its specific objectives included the discussion of site-specific management problems and future management options; develop a list of priorities for work to be carried out; to place time-frames on proposed works. A workshop kit was produced which included profiles of the public sites, including Bunjils Cave. This profile discussed Location and description; Summary of site significance; Present visitor use; Locating the site; Adequacy of carpark facilities/signage; Quality of foot tracks to site; appearance of the site environment; Suitability/ effectiveness of current management devices; Condition of the art surface; Current interpretation available; Interpretive potential and Issues for consideration.¹³ This workshop recommended that this site, along with

¹³ See item VAS Registry File Site No. 7423:001.

Ngamadjidj, Billimina, and Gulgurn Manja, be the developed as the primary focus for tourism related to art sites in the Gariwerd region. With regard to this site the following recommendations were made: the installation of a visitor book; the installation of the interim Bunjils Cave sign; as new signs and interpretive material is prepared drop all references to 'cave'; the more appropriate general term should be 'Bunjils Shelter'; consultations on the preparation for new material currently being prepared for the information board; the placing of a new clearly-visible directional sign on the approach road indicating the turn-off to the carpark; the installation of pit toilets at the carpark; DCE to plant prickly acacia or a similar plant at the back of the granite tor to prevent people from climbing onto the rock above the alcove; a DCE officer with necessary experience to inspect drainage/ erosion problems around the alcove and forward recommendations to Brambuk and VAS; regular maintenance by DCE staff must be ensured, including removal of litter and removal of any weeds within the grille, and monitoring for new graffiti; reassessment of existing drafts of the interpretive flyer and eventual production in a format similar to those for the Grampians National Park; preparation of a more detailed sign to be installed within the grille (Hall & Abrahams, 1990). In a subsequent meeting between Horsham DCE, VAS, and Brambuk staff the recommendations were agreed with, other than the installation of pit toilets.

In late December 2005- early January 2006, the Black Range Scenic Reserve was ravaged by wild fire and Bunjil Shelter and interpretive installations along the walking track were fire-affected. The shelter was closed to the public for several months as restoration works were put in place. In 2013 Parks Victoria commissioned Heritage Insight Pty Ltd, an archaeological consulting firm, to undertake new works at Bunjil Shelter, including redevelopment and upgrading of walking tracks and the protective cage (see Figure 4.2).

4.2.3 Graffiti and Defacements

The first known defacement of this site occurred on the 25th of January 1911, when two youths, circa 11 years of age, touched up the painting of Bunjil and one of the dogs, and added the following text: 'All This Wonderland H. Stanton E. Robson Mancave 25/1/11 H. Stanton'. This 1911 incidence is believed to be the only graffiti in the reserve until 1974 (Hough, 1987), although discussion with Keith Gidley (Pers. Comm. May 1991), the District Forester in the Stawell District of the Forests Commission, who oversaw the construction of the first protective fence in 1960, has alluded to vandalism/graffiti becoming a management problem before the cage was constructed. Compared with the extensive cover of graffiti at nearby Sister Rocks, where the landscape is similar, the Bunjil site has been subject to very low and episodic levels of graffiti. Despite the extensive distribution of rocks in the reserve suitable for graffiti, most of

the graffiti occurs in three areas: the tors immediate to the art site; the car park; and the area between the car park and the art site.

The ability to be able to positively date the graffiti and the identity of the offenders proved to be an asset in the ongoing attempt to determine the integrity of the art. In 1957 Massola was told that Robson had originally leased the locality which had since reverted back to the Crown. In 1911 Eric Robson lived in Stawell and Harry Stanton lived on a farm adjacent to the rock shelter. In 1981 Robson informed Gunn that at that time it was common practice for children to mark places they had walked to, ‘just to show they had been there’. When questioned Robson confirmed that he and Stanton touched up the painting, but stressed that they did not significantly alter the existing design which, they believed, had been painted by a swagman passing through the area some years before. Pigment analysis confirmed that repainting had occurred. In 1981 when shown a photograph of the site Robson stated that there appeared to have been no further changes in the paintings as he recalled them in 1911 (Gunn, 1983a).

The 1911 graffiti at this site is scientifically and historically important. Early and dated graffiti allows the stability of the rock surface to be estimated and thus allows a minimum age for the art to be calculated. Additionally the partial removal of the 1911 graffiti from this site increased the difficulty in demonstrating the authenticity of the art.

In September 1980, the site suffered severe damage from vandals (Gunn, 1980). The vandals used yellow, light blue, black and white paints, and black felt pens and scratching were also employed. Most of the graffiti consisted of names, though a drawing and a racist comment were added. Unfortunately the most extensive damage was done by the Stawell Shire Council who covered some of the graffiti with black spray-paint in an attempt at obliterating it.

In late January or early February 1988, probably during the Australia Day weekend, the weldmesh grille at the shelter was cut open and the shelter was entered. A small fire was lit on the inside of the grille, and the rock surface surrounding the figure of Bunjil was covered with slurry made from what appeared to be crushed charcoal and an unknown liquid. The inner part of the Bunjil figure was in-filled.

4.2.4 Intervention Works: Visitors' Books

In 1964, in a paper entitled ‘Aboriginal relics in Victoria’, Massola discussed the Bunjil art site. A ‘Visitor’s Book’ placed in the proximity of the shelter, so as to supply ‘visitors’ with somewhere to write their names other than on the walls or on the paintings, proved a great success. In attempting to verify and locate this information, a member of the work crew of the Stawell Forest District in the 1960s recollected that a visitor’s book was installed, but he could not recall the length of time it was in place, nor did he know what became of the books. He was adamant that books were not installed in any other art sites in the district. A visitors’ book was installed in January 1991.

4.2.5 Protective Measures: Grilles

Massola (1957), after having inspected the art site, recommended that it be protected by a wire enclosure and began to make the necessary arrangements to have the shelter protected. Massola (1969:107f) confirmed that '[i]n an effort to safeguard Bunjil's Cave from vandalism, the present writer arranged to have it protected by a wire-netting enclosure, as he has done for all the other shelters in the district. In all cases the wire was donated by the Cyclone Company of Australia, and it was erected by the Stawell branch of the Forest Commission'. In discussions with Keith Gidley he believed the site was fenced in 1960. He confirmed that the Stawell District of the Forests Commission was involved with the management of this site and stated that the Shire of Stawell had no involvement. In 1960 a work gang from the Stawell District erected the shelter using the galvanized piping and wire netting that Massola had personally trucked to Stawell. The Field Naturalists in Stawell were unhappy with the wire netting because it severely restricted photography of the paintings.

The 1960 grille was only in place for a couple of years before it was vandalized and replaced in circa 1962 by a much sturdier grille comprising iron bars rather than wire netting. Neither grilles allowed access to the alcove containing the motifs of Bunjil and the two dogs, nor did they enclose every motif at the site. Although it should be said that when they were constructed they covered the three principal motifs and the existence of the omitted motif was unknown to them.

In 1975 Michel Lorblanchet concluded that the paintings of Bunjil and the dogs were generally well preserved and adequately protected. He found, however, a very faint motif of a human figure, painted in red, outside the grille just above the mouth of the shelter. This motif was damaged by both exfoliation and lichen growth and he concluded that it was not possible to protect this human figure from deteriorating. In his report he stated that 'cleaning the wall and destroying the lichens must be avoided because the paintings cover some old fossilised lichens'. Lorblanchet's (1975) recommendations received little attention because of lingering doubts that the paintings were not of Aboriginal origin.

In October 1981, Gunn recommended re-gridding of the site to include the art outside the existing grille. In March 1983, VAS sought quotes for a re-fencing programme at this site and in late April Gunn oversaw the construction of the new grille (Gunn, 1983b). In May 1983 the grille was vandalized, and in June 1984 the gate of the grille was attacked on two occasions and the padlock smashed. Although entry was achieved on the second occasion no damage was done to the artwork. A new weldmesh grille was installed over the artwork on the week 29 October–2 November 1984. A photorail was also installed (R.G. Gunn, pers. comm.). On the 5th of November the new grille was found to have been severely damaged by vandals who had carried stone blocks up onto the top of the tor housing the art site and dropped them onto the roof of the grille. The damage took four men a full day to repair.

4.2.6 Protective Measures: Conservation

During conservation work conducted at this site in May 1988 Kosinova Thorn (1988a,b) took the opportunity to analyse the microclimate and hydrogeology of the alcove, tor, and the site, and recommended that given the problem of exfoliation of the granite, consolidation of sensitive surface areas was essential within the next five years. Water movement around the site and the lack of adhesion in the white pigment were also considered problematic for the longevity of the motifs at the site. They recommended immediate steps be taken to prevent sunlight falling onto the rock surface of the alcove during summer by the construction of shade cloths or louvers. With regard to drainage they recommended that corrective drip lines should be installed, together with selective grouting, to ensure that water running down the two fissures is discharged away from the alcove as far as possible. Subsurface drainage for the south and east sides of the tor could only be designed after further study of the site.

4.2.7 Graffiti Obliteration and Removal

After the site had been vandalized in September 1980, the Stawell Shire Council quickly instigated a clean-up operation but this consisted of a further spraying over the graffiti with rectangles of black paint that only compounded the problem. In subsequent discussions with staff at the Stawell Shire depot, Gunn learned that some of the damage he had observed had been done by Council staff as part of a clean-up operation. This entailed spray painting over the graffiti in the same colour to form solid black rectangles thus obliterating the names. This procedure is commonly employed when covering graffiti on buildings and constructions, however on natural rock the result was unfortunate. A small red stick figure outside the protective grille received a coat of spray paint with the result that Gunn (1980) believed it to be totally destroyed. After several experiments with various graffiti removal techniques, in May 1981, January 1986, and November 1986, conservators were employed in May 1988 to remove the graffiti at Bunjils shelter. They removed the 1911 graffiti, along with the spray can applications made by the Shire of Stawell in 1980.

4.2.8 Installation of Interpretive Material *in situ*

In October 1976 Coutts wrote to the Director of the National Museum of Victoria concerning the type of information that was present in some of the rock shelters in the Grampians. He considered this interpretive material to be a carry-over from the days when Massola was held in high respect and his comments were adopted by the Forests Commission and displayed in the rock shelters. Coutts had discussed these interpretive signs with Alan West and they were both of the opinion that the signs should be

withdrawn and replaced by more informative and accurate descriptions. Although Coutts agreed this was the responsibility of the Survey they did not claim expertise in this field and he requested that West be approached to design the contents of the new signs. Coutts included the text the Survey had drafted for Glenisla and he requested that the Museum adopt a similar format for the sake of uniformity. The Survey would be responsible for manufacturing the signs, their cost and installation.¹⁴

In June 1990 Nicholas Hall made the observation that the lack of interpretive material at rock art sites in the Grampians National Park was poor. Drafts of interpretive material had been prepared since 1983, and the delay in their preparation and installation was unacceptable. He considered the new sign to be placed *in situ*, produced by VAS, had less information than the one it was replacing, and it was visually inferior. He recommended that a new detailed sign be developed for placement within the cage suitable for the site's significance. In November a temporary sign was placed *in situ* that read as follows:

Interpretive signs for this site are being updated. If you wish to obtain information about the site, its art of Aboriginal culture in general, please call at Brambuk in Halls Gap. Sorry for any inconvenience.

In December 1990 Brambuk personnel placed a new sign *in situ*. Within three days or so it had been removed by an officer from the Stawell DCE. Apparently local residents had complained to the Stawell office about the wording of the sign which used some Aboriginal place names that were part of a proposed restoration before the Place Names Committee of Victoria. The view was taken that the sign pre-empted a decision by this committee, and accordingly the C&E officer took the action of removing the sign. After discussions between DCE and Brambuk the sign was reinstated.

4.2.9 Provision of Walking Tracks, Car Park et al

In June 1984 four people employed by the Horsham Region of CFL through the Community Employment Programme conducted work at the site upgrading the walking track to the art site, re-siting the car park and erosion control in the area as recommended by Gunn (1983b). During the week of 29 October–2 November 1984 rehabilitation works undertaken at the Reserve included the construction of a new car park, picnic ground and walking track. In May 1985 the Horsham Region of CFL through a team of Community Employment Programme workers conducted further works at the site including completing the information shelter, finished the protected fence around the art, walking tracks, a new car park, and tables and barbecue.

¹⁴ See VAS File 64/4/6.

Hall & Abrahams (1990) assessed that the carpark at this site was well arranged with picnic tables, barbecues and rubbish bins. However in the absence of toilet facilities people have often been observed using bushes and granite tors for this purpose and this was deemed to be a management problem. During the 1987 Gale and Gillen visitor survey, 14 per cent of those interviewed requested the installation of toilets. With regard to the walking track from the car park to the art site Hall considered the 150m track was well constructed, although he believed an indication of the distance to the site was needed at the car park. The nature trail that continues around the Reserve and includes the scarred tree, both of which are advertised in the information shelter, was unclear and visitors often had difficulty locating it.

4.2.10 Interpretation

In publications:

In his article outlining the ‘discovery’ of ‘Bunjils Cave’ Massola (1957) clearly believed the art was of Aboriginal origin. He identified two distinct phases of painting, a first phase, in red, of Bunjil and one dog, and a second and later phase which included the outlining of the original figures and the addition of a second dog. He interpreted the jacket-like body decorations found on the figure of Bunjil as being imitative of the tunics worn by soldiers in the 19th century. He considered the site the most important art site in Victoria because the identity of the figure was known. He also noted that W. Holmes who owned the land adjoining it for 34 years, had told him that the cave had always been known to his family and the painting had remained unchanged in that time.

In 1967 Halls published an article in which he attempted to explain the bichrome art style found at this site as the outcome of two distinct tribal groups having had occupation of the region. The red basal pigment he described as Buandig markings. The overlying white pigment he attributed to the Jardwadjali. Although Massola (1957) identified two distinct painting phases he made no attempt to place the art in the context of traditional Aboriginal land tenure or spatial organization. The belief that Buandig clan organization extended into the Grampian region has been widespread in the general literature concerned with the Aboriginal history of western Victoria, although there is little evidence for the claim (see Clark, 1990).

Information sheets and Tourist guides:

Because this site is generally considered a significant tourist attraction, organizations concerned with cultural tourism have sought to produce information sheets on this art site. The first information sheet was produced in 1975 by the Town of Stawell in conjunction with the Stawell and Grampians Tourist and Promotion Advisory Council. They produced a foolscap information sheet titled ‘Bunjil’s Shelter In The

Black Range Near Stawell'. The sheet gave a history of the site's discovery by Europeans and presented some data on Bunjil. Its contents were derived from Dawson (1881), Ord (1896), Howitt (1904), and Massola (1957).

A second pamphlet for the site was drafted in September 1984 by the Community Education and Information Branch of Conservation Forests and Lands (CFL). In November 1984, Gunn drafted text for a pamphlet on this site for VAS.¹⁵ In November 1985, VAS circulated two mock-up pamphlets on 'Bunjils Cave'. The drafts were produced by CFL. The pamphlet was intended to be distributed both at the site and also in the information shelter.¹⁶ With regard to the draft of the pamphlet, CFL was keen to trial it as a park note during the May school holidays. In March 1990 CFL produced a draft brochure on rock art in the Grampians National Park. Bunjils was one of the sites that were promoted.¹⁷

Hall & Abrahams (1990) noted that the pamphlet drafted for this site in 1984 had still not been produced. Hall believed that there is considerable potential to interpret this site in its physical setting, in relation to the traditional use of the surrounding plains. Discussion of other site types, such as the greenstone quarries, mounds and the nearby scarred tree should be incorporated. The significance of this interpretive picture is increased as it serves as a contrast to those sites in the adjacent sandstone ranges. The on-site sign needs to be designed to complement, not duplicate, the information provided in the shelter. Hall recommended that there was probably a need for a single page flyer similar to the northern and southern sites sheets produced for the Grampians National Park. These were produced by the Brambuk Aboriginal centre in 1990.

4.3 Third Phase: Enshrinement 1957–Present

MacCannell (1976) has identified 'enshrinement' as the third phase in the evolution of attractions. He understands this as having occurred when the 'framing material that is used' to protect and enhance the object of interest or the nucleus of the attraction becomes a named entity and becomes a tourist attraction in its own right. Thus in the case of an Aboriginal art site, enshrinement may be deemed to have occurred when tourists find the pathway to the site and the various interpretive signs that are placed en route and the management interventions that protect the art (drip lines; protective grilles) of interest in their own right.

¹⁵ See VAS Site Registry File 7423:001.

¹⁶ See Item 230/85 in VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt.1) 90/5788-1.

¹⁷ See VAS File 64/4/6.

Proposals for an interpretation centre:

Proposals for an interpretive centre at this site were first raised by Lorblanchet (1975) and repeated by Gunn (1983b). In August 1984 the Department of Conservation and Forests and Lands drafted a plan titled ‘Aboriginal Cave Art Interpretive Structure Bunjils Cave’. A small model of the structure was constructed.¹⁸ In November the Acting Director of the Historic Places Branch of CFL confirmed in a letter to the Regional Land Management Officer in the Horsham Region, that the Interpretive Centre as per August design was not to be constructed as it was inappropriate for the proposed function and site.

Information boards:

In September 1984, the Horsham Region of CF&L approached Jane Lennon, the Acting Director of the Historic Places Branch of CF&L for approval of a draft design of the proposed interpretive centre for the Bunjils Cave Scenic Reserve. Lennon confirmed that the proposed interpretive centre was not proceeding. In its place was proposed a simple information board costing less than \$1000. Lennon requested a meeting with the new Regional Management team to discuss what designs and information were appropriate for this site and for other sites in the Grampians. At the Acting Director’s request, staff in the Community education and Information Branch were requested to prepare a draft brochure and interpretive sign. This would be discussed at the meeting and sent to VAS and representatives of the Goolum-Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative in Horsham.¹⁹

In 1985 an information shelter was constructed but apparently the accompanying information was not installed until 1987. In June 1986, VAS received a draft copy of the text for the information board. In November 1986 VAS returned this text, presumably with comments, to the Horsham Region of CFL.²⁰ In December 1986 VAS received a final draft copy of the information for the interpretation board at the site from the Manager of the Horsham Region of CFL. Ben Gunn commented on the Billboard display on 27 April 1987.²¹ A further draft of the contents of the Bunjils Information Board was drafted by the Horsham Region of C&E in July/ August 1990. In June 1990 Hall recommended the design of new interpretational material for the information shelter must be undertaken in consultation with Brambuk and VAS to make the most of the site’s traditional and contemporary context.

¹⁸ See VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt. 1) 90/5788-1.

¹⁹ See VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt. 1).

²⁰ See 737/86 in VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt.1) 90/5788-1.

²¹ See VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt.1).

Site visitation surveys:

From July 1986 until May 1987, the Horsham Region of CFL operated and monitored a traffic counter at this and seven other sites in the National Park. In April 1987, tourist visitation to this art site was surveyed as part of a 'Grampians Art Sites-Visitor Use Study' which aimed to provide quantitative data on visitor use of publicly promoted art sites in the Grampians; information on visitor expectations; information relevant to long term management planning in areas such as physical protection of the site, visitor facilities, educational needs, graffiti removal, and development of the visitor centres in Halls Gap. The survey by Gale and Gillen (1987a, b) revealed that over the six day study period, this art site experienced the highest number of visitations of all the art sites surveyed, averaging 34 groups or 147 individuals per day. In their report, Gale and Gillen included a draft of an information sheet on this art site. With regard to this site they made three recommendations:—that pathways leading from the art shelter at Bunjils to the scarred tree be upgraded, clearly delineated and well sign-posted or closed off so as to discourage exploration by visitors searching for more art work;—a signpost at the beginning of the walk informing tourists of the length of the walk (in time) and the nature of the walk (not a strenuous walk);—the possibility of installing toilets be investigated at the request of respondents of the survey. It was observed that a large number of visitors used the bushes and rocks at the site for this purpose, which given the large number of visitors to the site led to conspicuous fouling of the site of the peak visitor period of Easter.

4.4 Fourth Phase: Duplication

MacCannell's (1976) fourth phase in the development of attractions is that of 'duplication', when copies of the nucleus of the attraction, in this case the art site, are made available through media such as paintings, photographs, and postcards. A replica of its art was put on display in a tourist attraction in nearby Stawell in 1975, and it was chosen by Australia Post in 1984 to represent Victorian rock art in a series of eight stamps entitled 'The First Australians'.

In January 1975 J. McNally, the Protector of Relics and Director of NMV, considered there were strong moral and philosophical arguments against restoring the paintings. However given that the rock art has a finite life, it was suggested that facsimiles should be produced in close proximity to their present locations. It was considered that the scheme needed funding from the National Estate Commission. Coutts called this the 'Facsimile Project'. In April 1975, W. Cleghorn, the Director of Stawell's Mini World, corresponded with McNally on the issue of the proposed 'Stawell's Mini World Tourist Project'. Copies of the correspondence were sent to the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Office. The Aboriginal exhibit planned for this project was designed to be representative of the 'former Aboriginal occupation' in the Stawell district. It was felt that the most appropriate form this could take was that of a replica of Bunjils

Cave. The rationale for this was the proximity of the art site to the Town of Stawell i.e. its local significance), and the value a replica would offer the tourist industry and those concerned to minimize the impact of visitation on the site. It was regarded that a replica located in Stawell would satisfy the merely curious visitor' and 'take the heat off the art site for all but the really interested and concerned who would be more likely to respect its integrity should they seek it out'.²² In August 1975 N. Glasby, from Glasby Bourne consultants in the World of Miniature preservation developments, submitted an application to the sites of significance committee of AIAS for pilot research funds into suitable methods of replication of rock art: they had had discussions with the photogrammetry division of the School of Surveying (Melbourne University) and it was their considered opinion that photogrammetry would accurately locate the paintings in relation to the rock contours for later reproduction and enable checking the accuracy of the facsimile, and produce a line drawing of the art for posterity. They believed this technique was not a practical method of reproducing full scale replicas of rock surfaces as it merely produced a line contour drawing of the subject, and it was not pursued further at this stage.

In 1968 Massola published *Bunjils Cave: Myths, Legends and Superstitions of the Aborigines of South-East Australia*. Although this art site was incorporated in the book's title, and a colour photograph of the painting features on the jacket cover—which incidentally has been reversed—discussion of the site is limited to a passing reference in the postscript (see Fig.4.3). In this reference Massola suggests it is possible that ceremonies were performed in front of the shelter. A photograph of the site is correctly presented in Massola (1971).

In early 1984 Australia Post asked Gunn to submit photographs of Victorian art sites. This site was subsequently selected to represent Victorian rock art in an issue of eight stamps featuring Aboriginal rock paintings entitled 'The First Australians' (see Fig.4.4). The issue was the first in a bicentennial series leading up to the bicentenary in 1988.²³ Nucolorvue Productions (n.d.) has released a postcard of Bunjil's Shelter.

4.5 Fifth Phase: Social Reproduction

For MacCannell, the final stage of sight sacralisation is social reproduction which occurs when groups, cities, and regions begin to name themselves after famous attractions. Other than the access road which has been named 'Bunjils Cave Rd', it has not been possible to find examples of social reproduction of this attraction. The local Brambuk Aboriginal cultural centre offers a guided tour which they have named 'Bunjil's Creation Tour'. In 2002, a now defunct Aboriginal tour company, 'Aboriginal

²² See VAS File 50-2-4 (Pt. 1) 90/5788-1.

²³ See VAS File 6-4-17, 90/4415-1.

Dreamtime Trails', based in Ballarat, offered a tour they named 'The Bunjil Creation Tour' (see Clark, 2002).

4.6 Conclusion

Bunjils Shelter did not become a tourist attraction until it was 'rediscovered' in 1957. Given its importance and fragility as an Aboriginal art site it has progressed through MacCannell's attraction development phases within a relatively short time period. The framing and elevation phase at Bunjils Shelter occurred before there was a significant increase in visitation; and rather than have tourist demand force management intervention, it was the fragility and rarity of the site that demanded that relevant authorities protect the art, or what Gunn understands as the 'nucleus' of the attraction. The management interventions taken to protect the art such as drip lines and protective grilles equate with Gunn's 'inviolable belt' zone. The enshrinement phase at Bunjils Shelter is not a significant phenomenon, though it may be argued that this occurs when tourists find the pathway to the site and the various interpretive signs that are placed *en route* of interest in their own right. These interventions equate with Gunn's 'zone of closure'. The duplication phase has occurred in that a facsimile of the shelter was produced and displayed in a nearby theme park attraction in Stawell in 1975 and the art featured in an Australian Post postage stamp series in 1984 dedicated to the First Australians. Social reproduction of the attraction has been minimal probably due to the fact that it is not deemed appropriate for entities to name themselves after an Aboriginal art site, especially one that features a representation of the creator spirit Bunjil.

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7423/001 Bunjils: Interpretation.

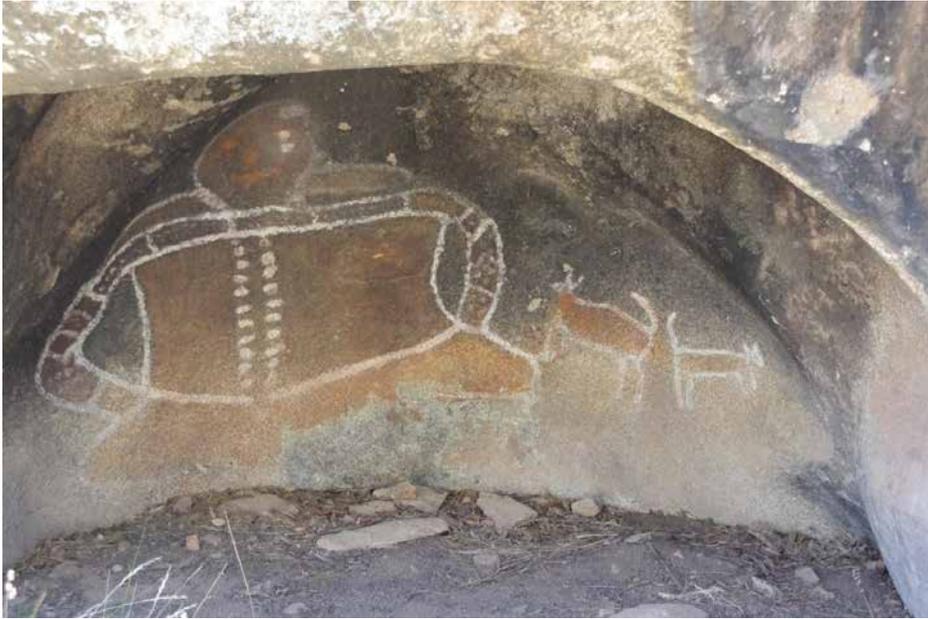


Fig. 4.1: Bunjils Shelter: Photograph Peter J. Clark 29/12/2013

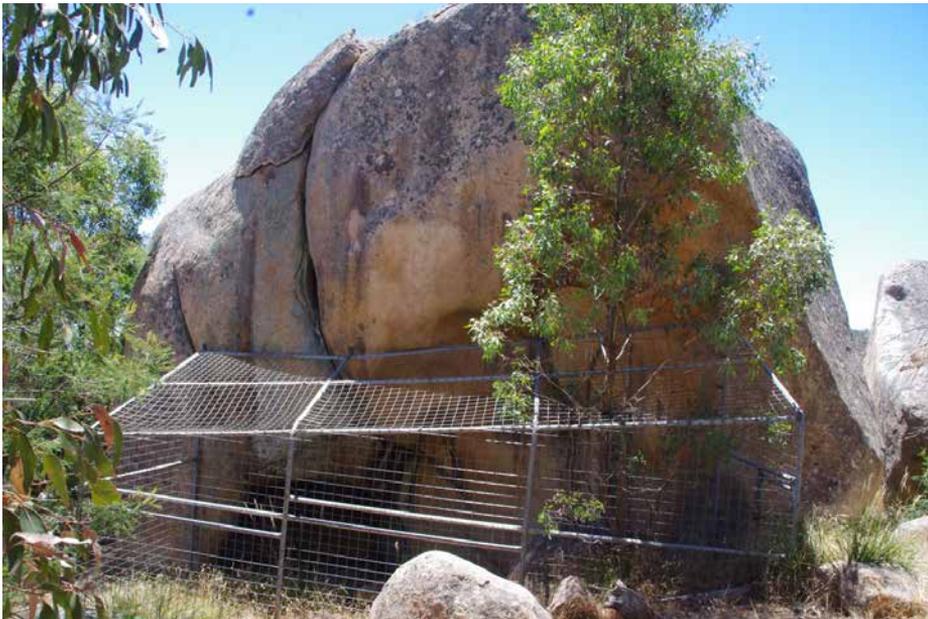


Fig. 4.2: Bunjils Shelter: photograph Peter J. Clark 29/12/2013

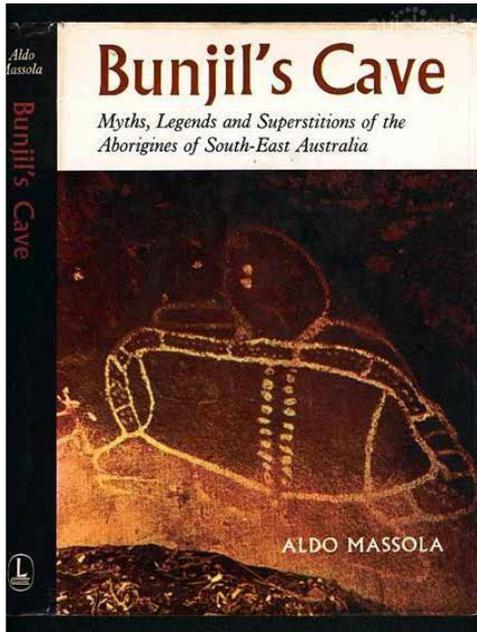


Fig. 4.3: Reproduction of Bunjil on cover of Massola's 1968 text. Note the image is reversed.

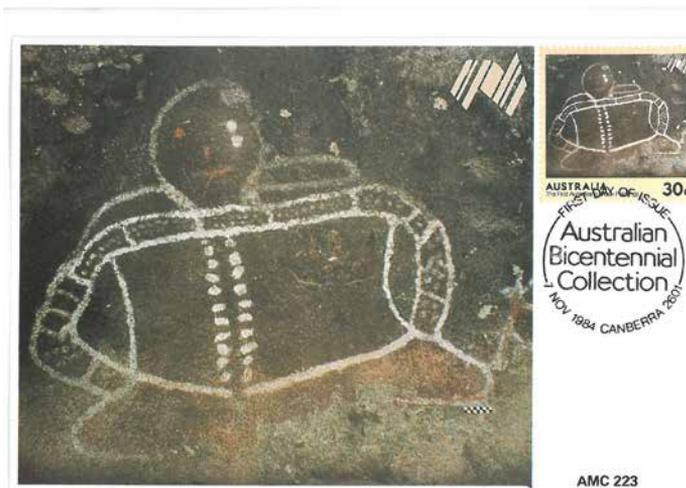


Fig. 4.4: Postcard Australian Bicentenary Aboriginal Art Bunjils Shelter 1984 (Source: Ian D. Clark postcard collection).