

I have been very fortunate to have handed down to me from my dad, factual accounts and history of the Bibbulmun people by Daisy Bates, a journalist who was lucky to be accepted and taken in by them. The Bibbulmun people were the largest homogenous race in all of Australia whose territory extended along the coast from Jurien Bay to Esperance.

It has taken many weeks to explore the culture and significance of this land in which we are on. Students have engaged in the meaning of symbols and how to represent their knowledge through this painting in connection with this amazing and sacred land.

This painting represents the area which we now know as the Mundaring Weir. The early 1900's saw the end of the Bibbulmun race as there were not even 100 full blooded people left. Joobaitch, a leader of the Ballarruk clan was the last of his tribe and his family were driven from camp to camp until the last (ka'la) fire at the Mundaring Weir which is rightfully called 'Boeroloy'n'. This is what we have named our painting.

The blue is the Helena River which contains the serpent known as the Wawgal. The Bibbulmun people believed the Wawgal controlled earth, fire and water. It also caused or prevented sickness and death. It made the most important food and totem laws and was the punisher for any breach of these laws.

Certain ceremonies had to be performed when passing by this place. Fresh rushes were laid across and a piece of cooked meat was placed at the edge of the water. Clans who camped here had to obey the laws and any animal that came to rest here had to be left alone.

The painting also represents meeting grounds for men only and women only. There's also campsites along the river as this place was one of the major resting spots for clans passing through. The yellow dots represent the acacia which the people used for a very wide range of purposes: from food and medicines, to utensils such as digging sticks and barbs, weapons, musical instruments, firewood, ash, glues, string, dyes, ceremonial items and seasonal signals. And this knowledge was taught word-of-mouth from generation to generation for tens of thousands of years.

The reds and oranges represent the earth underneath which include patterns to give meaning to the spirits within each landform. Throughout the painting there is a main path used by clans to move across the land, using it for trading and changing campsites with the seasons.

Throughout the painting are possum and kangaroo tracks as these animals were plentiful and considered a family and food totem to the people.