Gubbi Gubbi

Traditional Custodians
From The Dawn of Time

Prepared By: Bruce Cresswell
Dedicated to Dr. Eve Fesl OAM, CM
Senior Gubbi Gubbi Elder

Two ways educated, living in two cultures.

Eve has had a highly successful life of achievement on the sporting field, in the halls of academia and bringing Gubbi Gubbi language to life.
Indigenous Australia faces many challenges. It is only in the last 2-3 hundred years that the original inhabitants of the land were overrun by European arrival.

The Gubbi Gubbi were peaceful people, traversing and living sustainably from the land. 3,500 Gubbi Gubbi walked where, today, over 500,000 people live. From the time of European arrival Gubbi Gubbi numbers dropped to as few as 350 - a direct result of murder (shooting, poison) and illness.

Now they have secured their traditional lands through the Federal Court and yet still they face issues that require resolution. Sadly some of these issues arise from European ignorance of culture and history. Others from fellow Indigenous people who make false claims or who do not sit and explore their differences, together, for resolution. Sometimes the differences are violently argued when considered conversation might bring agreement.

Gubbi Gubbi culture includes respect for the land and people. In turn they look for your respect.
Gubbi Gubbi were hunter-gatherer nomadic peoples who left no permanent, man built, structures. A midden is a collection of food remnants consisting primarily of shells. Shell middens contain evidence of Gubbi Gubbi activities. They can include:

- the remains of hearths and cooking fires
- tools made from stone, bone or shell
- bones from land and sea animals used as food

Bird bones found in sites can show us the season during which the middens were occupied. For example, shearwaters are only hunted during their spring migration to the south. Mammal bones, for example from seals or wallabies, can indicate that Aboriginal people concentrated on marine or land resources at a particular site. Middens may contain evidence of stone working and stone artefacts. Stone will often have come from a very different area, showing that it was traded or transported. Scientists occasionally find shell or bone artefacts, such as fish hooks or barbs, in the upper layers of shell middens.

Local Middens show Gubbi Gubbi collected only adult sizes of shellfish ensuring stock was not depleted.
A local Midden can be viewed at Bli Bli’s Muller Park
A Durrn or Kippa Ring (sometimes called a Bora Ring) were places where Gubbi Gubbi would meet to discuss events and plans.

They are significant ritual structures, which are probably unique in the world. They are hunter gatherer constructions of known function constituting notable monuments in the landscape. They consist of earth built and compacted by ritual activity.

They have continued significance, sacredness and relevance for Gubbi Gubbi people in the areas in which they occur. A ring is available for viewing at Bestman Road on the way to Bribie Island.

The Toorbul Durrn (Bora Rings) were associated with the young men, kippa, into adulthood. In 1841 as many as 2000 Gubbi Gubbi gathered here, some from as far away as Noosa, for ceremonies.

In 1998 a “Durrn” ring was built to recognise reconciliation. It was opened by Mrs. Evelyn Serico at the Noosa Museum in Pomona which was recognised as the Gubbi Gubbi Keeping Place on 4th August 2001.
Grinding Grooves

Grinding grooves are created by activity such as sharpening tools (axes, spears).

These grooves are created by the manual rubbing of stones onto flat areas of soft rock, particularly sandstone, in areas near creek beds or other water sources.

Stones axes were common and made by flaking and shaping pieces of hard stone, which were sharpened and polished on abrasive sandstone, using water as a lubricant. This process resulted in a series of long, narrow and deep oblong grooves on the sandstone slabs.

Grooves were also produced during seed or root grinding, a task generally done by women to produce flour. Often, women would return to these areas resulting in shallow disc-shaped depressions on the surface of the sandstone. Millstones were used at these sites. Small ones could be carried around but larger ones would remain at camps between occupation periods. If large sandstone slabs were unavailable, large grinding dishes were used for milling instead.

Some grinding grooves are located in rock shelters and may be associated with paintings or engravings, where they were used in grinding ochre.
Grinding Grooves

Located at Rocky Creek near Landsborough
World history is thousands of years old and made of civilisations such as the Egyptian, Incas, Britons, Chikoan and European which have left behind the Pyramids, Stonehenge and the ancient ruins of Rome and Greece.

Gubbi Gubbi history is tens of thousands of years old. It precedes all the above and while it does not have the edifices of other civilisations it has much more. An intimate association with the land determines a way of thinking expressed through dance, ceremonies, art and ornaments - a special way of seeing and thinking. Gubbi Gubbi have always practiced sustainability, respect and friendship.

The Gubbi Gubbi share their culture and history as a their contribution to Australian history and understanding of our ancient home land.

Understanding Culture and Heritage leads to a future of sharing and understanding.

The Noosa Museum in Pomona is the Gubbi Gubbi Keeping Place, where components of Gubbi Gubbi culture and history may be viewed.
Noosa Museum, in Pomona, is home to the Gubbi Gubbi Keeping Place.

The Gubbi Gubbi area features various stone artefacts along with weapons and shields. It has a wide range of photographs and associated documentation of history and culture.

In 1998 this was the site for creating an Island of Reconciliation. This is a short walk through the park to an Island site with a stone ring where one can sit quietly and contemplate. A stone, laid by the then Mayor Bob Abbot and Mrs Evelyn Serico Senior Gubbi Gubbi Elder recognises reconciliation.
Gubbi Gubbi people have lived on their lands for thousands of years. Their history is long and based on caring for the land through understanding nature. Respect for tradition is important to their future.

This book is intended to act as a guide to Gubbi Gubbi and to understand more of their unique attachment to the land. Come and begin to learn their stories under our clear blue skies.

Bruce Cresswell - Author, Photographer