

## **COLD WEST WIND AND ARTEFACT MAKING SEASON**

Just like the summer period was define principally by the hot north winds, so the deep winter period was principally defined by the cold westerly winds. The cold west wind winter and artifact making period occupied the sixth, seventh and eighth lunar months from May 11<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Being a season not conducive to travel it was again more of a village based ‘sit-down’ period. It was a time conducive to the close instruction of children in various skills and also when women’s pregnancies were developing.

It was therefore also a time spent in artifact and tool manufacture in preparation for the active and bountiful spring period that was coming. Artifacts were of course able to be made throughout the year, but this and the teaching process involved was the major activity in this period of cold and inclement weather.

During any breaks in the weather, traditional games would be played and this included the tribal football game of Marngrook. The more limited children’s versions of Marngrook were popular daily game for the children.

The first of the games was Parndo. This directly equates with ‘markers-up’ where one child kicks to a group and the child who marks the ball then takes their turn to kick to the group. The only difference being that the child kicking the ball did to whilst encircled by the other children, who then rushed in to compete for the mark.

The second of the games was Bidi which directly equated with ‘kick to kick’ where two groups of players kicked the ball between them. These children’s versions, like the adult game of Marngrook, emphasised kicking the ball high rather than long, and so encourage spectacular high marking by the contestants. Like the adult game, these children’s games were open to both sexes.

The only restrictions in the adult game were that all opponents had to be matched by size, gender and totemic group. In other words a big person could not be matched with a small person, a man could not play against a woman, and you opponent had to be ‘right-skin’. That is, the skin-group hat you married into.

These tribal football games were not restricted to the winter season though, and were played year-round as the opportunity presented. This included in particular the inter-clan business period. However the reduction of grass following the burning off season and the lower temperatures made colder months the most conducive time for playing Marngrook.

The first flowering of Silver Wattles signaled the end of the cold west wind and artifact-making season and the arrival of the morning frost and bark harvest season.