

Archaeologists study rock art at secret site

Posted Sat May 29, 2010 4:34pm AEST

Some of the world's top rock art archeologists are seeking to uncover the heritage of the Indigenous traditional owners of a remote part of the Northern Territory's Arnhem land.

- [Map: Darwin 0800](#)

The international team of archaeologists spent 10 days at a secret location on the west Arnhem land plateau.

They excavated a naturally-formed sandstone shelter which is covered in rock art depicting animals and mythological spirits.

The team uncovered wooden and stone artefacts and animal bones.

The site was found three years ago by the Jawoyn Association, who represent the area's traditional owners and invited the archaeologists to conduct the dig.

The team's leader, Bruno David from Monash University, says the finds are being analysed in laboratories in Victoria and New Zealand.

"As we're starting from the top, we're getting very large amounts of charcoal, which means there were lots of fireplaces in this area," he said.

"There is also a lot of bone and stone artefacts. But we are also getting getting bits of rock, where we find the ochre made for paintings, which we can date. We can do radio carbon dating on these levels to find out how old that paint was."

It will be at least two months before they have results of tests.

Tags: [community-and-society](#), [indigenous](#), [science-and-technology](#), [archaeology](#), [aboriginal](#), [australia](#), [nt](#), [darwin-0800](#)

[MORE stories from Northern Territory](#)