

# Wasp

Peter Botsman

1 January, 2025

# Hands and fingers

are not the result of a 4d printer or ai or a human brain-storm.

Hands and fingers perform the most delicate tasks. They can pick up leaves or lift up rocks. They can stroke a back or shake another hand. They can convey love.

Fingers, delicately projected, can convey irony, ridicule abuse and, even, hate.

There is a world of signs from fingers and hands. In NE Arnhem non-verbal communication through fingers and hands is a whole universe. For those without hearing, fingers become tongues.

Fingers and hands have evolved from a million, million tasks. Where did they come from? Jelly like pads, fins, paws, from walking on all fours to walking up right? From eating berries to combing lice and ticks from hair, now they might write a word or tap a key pad.

Lightning like nerve endings and ideas and projects flow through them. It is hard not to think that some higher being has a hand in creating hands and fingers.

As we contemplate machines that can do the work of thousands of men we forget these special hands and fingers that still control joy sticks and buttons and levers making even excavators and bulldozers and graders dance like delicate ballerinas in the hand of a skilled operator.

Is it ironical now that the blood sometimes stops flowing to fingers after hour after hour of touching tiny screens.. I suppose coming generations will be born with hands and fingers that contain reservoirs of blood that never get pins and needles or become paralysed from hours of twiddling..

Tradesmens hands and fingers have little cuts and bruises here and there..

I once cut through the index and middle fingers of my left hand with a chain saw. I was pruning trees, it was twilight and I promptly vomited at the sight of my dangling middle finger and the mangled nail of my index finger. There was no pain only shock, but I will remember the pain of the injections into my fingers forever. It was an exquisite spine tingling knitting needle running from my fingers to my brain. After a year of finger therapy I could play guitar again, thinking of Django Reinhardt.

I once sat next to Jack Munday on a plane. He knew me as an intellectual. He was surprised and impressed that my hands were weathered and marked.. and my fingers were deeply scarred .. a workers hands, farmers hands. He judged me by my hands and the conversation became good and easy between us.

On December 29, 2024 I was stung by a wasp on the same middle finger I had nearly cut off with a chain saw and the vicious insect also got me under my left wrist. I had unknowingly come too close to his nest. I nearly fainted from the pain. It was a struggle to walk the half a kilometre home.

When I told the legendary Vin Winch about my saga he told me how he was bitten in the neck with a cow in a cattle crush. He too nearly fainted and the cow went berserk in the crush.

Little insects can bring down men and beasts.

My hand swelled up to my elbow and on New Years Eve I went to bed with anti-histamines and bandages for the swelling.

I woke up after midnight dreaming of fingers, hands and toes.

## Reading

- Kivell, T. L. (2015). Evidence in Hand: Recent Discoveries and the Early Evolution of Human Manual Manipulation. *Journal of Anatomy*, 227(4), 519-536.
- Bardo, A., et al. (2020). Get a Grip: Variation in Human Hand Grip Strength and Implications for Human Evolution. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 144, 102785.
- Marzke, M. W. (2013). Evolution of the Human Hand: Approaches to Acquiring, Analysing, and Interpreting the Anatomical Evidence. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 368(1630), 20120441.
- Almcija, S., et al. (2015). The Evolution of Human and Ape Hand Proportions. *Nature Communications*, 6, 7717.
- Rolian, C. (2009). The Evolution of Hand Proportions in Primates. *Evolutionary Biology*, 36(1), 100-112.
- Young, N. M., et al. (2010). Evolution of the Primate Hand: Anatomical Changes and Adaptive Significance. *Journal of Anatomy*, 216(4), 426-445.
- Tocheri, M. W., et al. (2008). The Evolution of the Hominoid Wrist and the Origin of the Human Hand. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105(9), 3214-3219.
- Susman, R. L. (1994). Fossil Evidence for Early Hominid Tool Use. *Science*, 265(5178), 1570-1573.
- Napier, J. R. (1962). The Evolution of the Hand. *Scientific American*, 207(6), 56-62.
- Marzke, M. W., & Shackley, M. S. (1986). Hominid Hand Use in the Pliocene and Pleistocene: Evidence from Experimental Archaeology and Comparative Anatomy. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 15(6), 439-460.
- Alm cija, S., et al. (2007). The Evolution of the Hand in Miocene Apes: Implications for the Appearance of the Human Hand. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 52(4), 479-500.
- Richmond, B. G., & Strait, D. S. (2000). Evidence that Humans Evolved from a Knuckle-Walking Ancestor. *Nature*, 404(6776), 382-385.
- Ward, C. V., et al. (1999). Functional Morphology of Proconsul Manual Phalanges from the Kaswan-ga Primate Site, Rusinga Island, Kenya. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 36(6), 731-765.