

Placenames Australia

Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

an initiative of the Australian Academy of Humanities, supported by the Geographical Names Board of NSW



In search of the Basaltic Rock

In August 1840 the Police District of Macquarie was formally gazetted. It was described as:

Embracing the whole of the county of Macquarie, above Crescent Head; bounded on the north by a line bearing west to a range heading Maria's and Wilson's Rivers, and by this range and a line from thence bearing south-westerly to Werrekembe, at the source of the Hasting's River, and by the range heading the Apsley River to the Basaltic Rock, thence by a range to the range heading the River Peel; on the south by the range heading Hunter's River to the source of the Barnard, and by this river and the Manning to Farquhar's Inlet on the sea shore, which forms the eastern boundary of the district to the point northward of Crescent Head aforesaid.¹

Despite the reference to the 'county of Macquarie' no such county had yet been proclaimed so the creation of the police district was, in fact, the first time that the boundaries of the Macquarie district had been officially published. The County of Macquarie was eventually proclaimed in 1843 prior to elections for the reconstituted Legislative Council, but covered only the eastern two-thirds of the police district.²

The police district, not the county, served for the establishment of the Macquarie District Council in 1843³ and it remained more or less unchanged until 1851 when, following the creation of the Police District of Armidale, its boundaries were brought into line with those of the county.⁴

Of the placenames listed in the original description all but one have endured. The exception is the Basaltic Rock, first described in an article on the opening of the north-eastern districts published in 1842:

before we quit New England, we must notice the remarkable object described on the maps as the Basaltic Rock. This is an insulated, and perpendicular column of basalt, composed of hexagonal prisms closely cemented, and it forms an interesting feature of research to the geologist, and a picturesque and singular object of contemplation to the amateur tourist.⁵



The Basaltic Rock (aka 'the pinnacle') from Thunderbolts Way

Yet, within a few years of losing its status as a boundary mark, the Basaltic Rock, a remarkable object which was to be of such interest, disappeared from the toponymic lexicon. So the question naturally arises, 'Where, exactly, was the Basaltic Rock?'

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From the Editor



the AGM papers to anyone who'd like a copy.)

Our recent AGM for Placenames Australia saw the election of the committee for the coming year—all continuing members were re-elected, and we also welcome Stuart Duncan back onto the committee. (I'm happy to email

Congratulations to our ANPS Director, Jan Tent, whose article 'Indigenous toponyms in the Antipodes' has won the American Name Society's award for Best Article in *Names*, the society's journal. (See our website tab 'Published Articles' for a direct link to that paper.)

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Placenames in the media

Huskies

The ABC reports that the Antarctic Place Names Committee is naming 26 features after the huskies that supported Australia's century-old ice exploration in the southern continent.

Aboriginal placenames

The *National Indigenous Times* has reported Noel Pearson's comment that ancient Aboriginal placenames should be officially recognised. He estimates that fewer

than one in 100 are acknowledged and says reinstating them is a vital agenda for the country.

An Aboriginal name on Pluto

Names for features on the dwarf planet Pluto have been recently approved by the International Astronomical Union, says *The Guardian*. Among them is the **Djanggalawul Fossae**, a network of depressions named after three siblings who feature in Yolngu mythology.

We recommend...

Map Matters

is the newsletter of the *Australia on the Map Division* of the Australasian Hydrographic Society. The current issue has an article by Peter Reynders on commemorative plaques relating to James Cook's navigation. You'll also find articles in a series by Trevor Lipscombe on misplaced names from Cook's voyage: we'll be printing an updated version of Trevor's piece on **Cape Howe** next year.

www.australiaonthemap.org.au

Joshua Nash

has produced another article on cultural toponymy that should be of interest to many:

'Drawing, toponymy, and linguistic pilgrimage', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 2017.

The article is published online—go to

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2017.1377496>

Notes and queries

Ruth Park Walking Trail

Our suggestion (March 2016) that this trail at Victor Harbor was named in honour of **Ruth Alison Park**, headmistress and conservationist, has been confirmed by Pamela Schmidt, her biographer.

Penguin

Bill Koetsier has pointed out that **Penguin** (Puzzle 63) is on Tasmania's *north-west* (rather than *east*) coast.

Perhaps we had the equally unusual **Cygnnet** in mind! Bill says that although **Penguin** actually has no fairy penguins, it does have a Big Penguin that dresses up for special occasions—and he supplied this photo as proof!



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Finding Sellecks Flat

Where exactly is, or was, the Victorian goldrush settlement of Sellecks Flat? How did it get its name? Our long-term correspondent Angus Watson has been researching this for some time, and now Ron Woods has joined the search. Here's Ron's report on this piece of detective work.

During the mid-nineteenth century Victorian gold rush, many placenames were bestowed by miners, with little thought other than to distinguish their location from other miners in the next gully. As rumours of a new gold find circulated, the miners moved on, often leaving some worked-over ground as the only trace of their presence.

The itinerant nature of the gold rush created problems for anyone researching the history of the period. Duplication of placenames was common: almost every goldfield had its own *Golden Point*, *Chinamans Gully*, *Scotchmans Lead*, etc. Even today, Victoria has three localities officially named *Golden Point*.

Equally frustrating is the short-term nature of many names. While some places lasted long enough to be recorded on maps, others existed for barely the blink of an eye, with their names appearing only in the occasional census, birth notice or newspaper report.

To produce his invaluable book, *Lost & Almost Forgotten Towns of Colonial Victoria*, Angus B Watson analysed census records from the 1841–1901 period. He then attempted to find the exact location of every place listed in those records—definitely not a job for the faint-hearted!

Sellecks Flat

Although the name appears to have been in use for almost ten years, Sellecks Flat seems to fall into the ‘blink of an eye’ category. Angus’s research showed that, in 1871 (the only census in which it appears), it had a population of 29 males and 12 females, living in 12 dwellings.¹ But where was it?

Angus noted in his book: *Described as a mining centre, this is another teaser from the 1871 census results. All of the information provided indicates that it was in the same vicinity as Scotts Marsh.*²

In 1889, Scotts Marsh was renamed Scotsburn.³ Allowing for a likely increase in population during the intervening twenty years, the figures from the 1891 census of Scotsburn correspond to the combined 1871 numbers for Sellecks Flat and Scotts Marsh.⁴ This led Angus to surmise that Sellecks Flat may have been in present-day Scotsburn, and possibly

on land first selected by George Selleck (spelt *Sellick* on the Parish Plan and some other records). He felt that today’s Scotsburn primary school and public hall were the most likely site of Sellecks Flat.

Thomas Casts Doubt

At least one birth is known to have occurred at Sellecks Flat; that of Thomas Deering (1877–1962). He recalled that Sellecks Flat was near Buninyong and Ballarat. This caused Angus to have some doubts about its location and prompted him to undertake further research, from which he formed the opinion that Sellecks Flat might have been south of Cobblers Gully at Magpie, west of Buninyong.

In 1858 George Selleck became a member of the newly formed Buninyong Roads Board.⁵ One of its early tasks was to complete a road connecting Buninyong to the Magpie diggings. This road, now known as Aubreys Road, made it easier for the residents of Magpie to reach Buninyong—and to visit George’s Crown Hotel in the township. Both the hotel and its host were highly-regarded in the community. (Although not the original building, the Crown Hotel still trades on the same site today.) It is believed George Selleck was also involved in some mining activity and may have had other business interests in the vicinity of Cobblers Gully and Magpie. If so, this could have led to his name being applied to the area. While researching this possibility, Angus contacted me for help as a result of my former Place Names role at the City of Ballarat. In addition to local sources, I searched newspapers on that priceless resource, Trove.

Doubting Thomas

The earliest reference that gave a possible clue to the location of Sellecks Flat (although not named as such) was a notice for a clearing sale on land owned by George Selleck. The sale was to be held on 29 July 1862 at Mount Buninyong, near the Toll-bar, about nine miles from Ballarat, on the Geelong road.⁶ This toll-bar, one of several that once surrounded Buninyong, was near the intersection of present-day Yendon No 2 Road.

On 29 December 1864, the Buninyongshire Engineer reported⁷ that *certain repairs at Selleck’s and Scott’s farms,*

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The original description of the police district places the Basaltic Rock close to where the range separating the upper reaches of the Macleay and Manning River systems meets the Great Dividing Range. However, because both ranges are relatively broad this covers a considerable area within which to search for the feature.

The geology of the region is dominated by Comboyne Basalt,⁶ often appearing on the surface as exposed outcrops. While the singling out of one such outcrop suggests that it was a distinct and unambiguous landmark, to the best of the author's knowledge the Basaltic Rock has been marked on only two maps, the first published by Robert Dixon in 1837⁷ and the other by Richard Thompson in 1842.⁸ Both are drawn on a scale of 8 miles to the inch but neither is sufficiently accurate to determine a precise location.

Fortunately, a valuable clue was found in an 1856 account of a new line of road from Stroud to Walcha which stated that the road passed through the Nowendoc Run

*...to the Rocky Mound on the main range, called the Basaltic Rocks, which range divides the waters flowing to the eastward from the westerly waters on Solway's run.*⁹

Herbert Salwey, a New England solicitor and former Port Macquarie resident, held a Crown lease on the 32,000 acre St Leonard's Run.¹⁰ It lay along the Cobrabald River south of Walcha and had earlier been described as being:

*Bounded on the east by a range dividing it from the Walcha Run, Mr Dennis and Murphy's Tiar Run; on the west by a range dividing it from Fletcher's run, Branga Plains; on the north by a line from a sugarloaf hill on Fletcher's range to an old washpool on Cobrabald Creek, and from thence by a marked tree line bearing north-east to a sugarloaf hill on the Walcha Range, dividing it from Girard's run, Branga Park; and on the south by dense scrub*¹¹

The dense scrub on the south was where the plains ended and the land rose steeply to the Great Dividing Range and, by implication, the site of the Basaltic Rock.

The situation was further clarified by an 1887 map of the Parish of Salwey in County Vernon.¹² By then the large runs had been divided into smaller portions but on the southern boundary of the parish are depicted two features that would have overlooked the former St Leonard's Run. One is labelled 'Basalt Rock' and the other 'Hill of Columnar Basalt'.

In search of...

The 'Basalt Rock' is readily identified as the present site of trigonometrical station 'Grundy' (1463 metres) and the Grundy Fire Tower. The 'Hill of Columnar Basalt' is situated a little over 5 km west-south-west of Grundy on the northern boundary of the Ngulin Nature Reserve and appears on current maps as an unnamed hill rising to about 1440 metres. Jim Young, owner of the neighbouring 'Sallywood' station, informed the author that owing to its prominence the hill is known locally as 'the pinnacle'.¹³ It is important to note that this is a microtoponym with no formal standing and should not be confused with that of another feature, also in Walcha Shire but some 50 km to the north east, which bears the official name *The Pinnacle*.¹⁴

Grundy trig and 'the pinnacle' are accessible from Thunderbolts Way via Hell Hole Forest Road which runs along the Great Dividing Range. The Grundy trig site, despite heavy disturbance caused by the erection of the trig station, the fire tower and associated buildings, has an abundance of exposed basalt, some of it aggregated into small blocks. However, it is obvious that a large amount of rock has been removed from the hill to allow for the erection of buildings and for use in road construction.

The basalt formations at 'the pinnacle' are less obviously disturbed. Although the accessible southern slope is heavily vegetated with little exposed rock, the summit and upper part of the steep northern slope are largely free of vegetation and covered with irregularly shaped prisms of basalt. Some of these are closely aggregated to form blocks or short columns (photo below) and stretch down the hillside towards the Cobrabald River valley 170 metres below. Although nothing matches the description of the Basaltic Rock as 'an insulated, and perpendicular column of basalt' it is quite possible that such a formation existed at one time. The area was reserved for timber as long ago as 1882¹⁵ and prior to the creation of the Ngulin Nature Reserve from a section of the Tuggolo State Forest in 1999¹⁶ would have been significantly affected by forestry operations. Exposed basalt there would have been an easily available source of material for constructional purposes.

It is worth mentioning that apart from these hills, two others were also originally considered as possible candidates for the Basaltic Rock. One, now the site of trigonometrical station 'Flags' and a communications

...the Basaltic Rock



Aggregations of basaltic prisms on the summit of 'the pinnacle'

tower, is called the *Black Sugarloaf* but since it lies a few kilometres west of the former St Leonard's Run overlooking what was the Branga Plains Run it was dismissed. The other is situated within the Riamukka State Forest around 5 km east-south-east of Grundy trig, and, according to Vic Galvin of the Walcha Historical Society, some decades ago contained a section of five- or six-sided prisms 'varying in width and closely grouped in vertical columns'. However, this site, which is still being actively quarried, lies on the range separating the Macleay and Manning Rivers eastward of the Great Dividing Range, so it, too, was disregarded.

To decide between the two remaining candidates, Grundy trig site and 'the pinnacle', more information was needed, and since the Basaltic Rock first appeared on a published map in 1837 it must have been identified in an earlier survey. The two government surveyors known to have been employed in the region at that time were Heneage Finch and James Ralfe, and an examination of surveyors' letters held by State Archives NSW revealed one in which Ralfe wrote to Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell to say that on 5 March 1835 he (Ralfe) had gone to the range at the head of the Barnard River

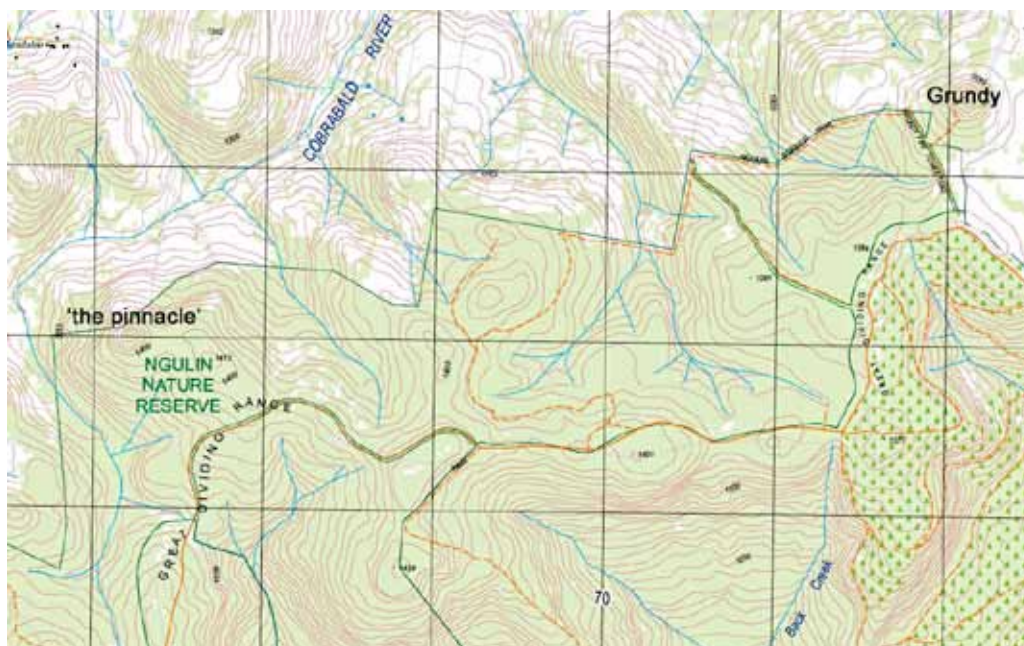
and traced in a North and North easterly Direction over beautiful open Table Land watered abundantly with Swamps which from the Direction they took were my only Guidance as to the Direction of the Range which was so undulating and of such Width as to render the exact Summit imperceptible, on the 12th I perceived rather a

*large Stream just under my right which I descended to and observing it flow in a northerly Direction I concluded it to be the Apsley I therefore crossed it in order to find the Range required between the Port Macquarie and Trial Bay Rivers...*¹⁸

This, it transpired, was the first official survey of the area and the only one completed before the Basaltic Rock appeared on Dixon's map. Ralfe's field notes have not been found but the series of nine maps showing his trace are held in the archive. Although they contain very few comments, on one of them a point on the range is marked with the annotation 'A Basaltic Column of aggregations of regular five-sided Prisms'.²⁰ As this was the only point singled out for special attention there can be little doubt that it is what became known as the Basaltic Rock. Even so, the difficulty remained of relating Ralfe's map, drawn to the then-standard 40 chains to the inch,²¹ to a current topographic map. Without marked reference points other than the feature itself the problem appeared insoluble.

However, the solution came in the form of another map. Draftsman Frederick D'Arcy had taken the maps of Ralfe's trace and connected them to those of Ralfe's earlier survey of the Barnard River,²² reducing the whole to a scale of 2 miles to the inch.²³ When a digital image of D'Arcy's map was superimposed on that of a current topographic map²⁴ and its scale and orientation adjusted so that the course of the Barnard River on the two maps fitted accurately, it revealed that Ralfe's basaltic column

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Detail from Lands Department 1:25000 series topographic map 9235-3N Branga Plains

fell squarely on the hill in the Ngulin Nature Reserve described on the map of the Parish of Salway as the ‘Hill of Columnar Basalt’, now known locally as ‘the pinnacle’.

It was a satisfactory conclusion to a search that, had the crucial information come to light earlier, would have been far easier—yet another instance of the clarity of hindsight.

Acknowledgement

I wish to express my gratitude to Jim Young of ‘Sallywood’ and Vic Galvin of the Walcha Historical Society for their valuable assistance in this project.

Tony Dawson

Port Macquarie Historical Society

Endnotes

¹ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 19 August 1840 [Issue No. 50] p787

² *New South Wales Government Gazette* 28 February 1843 [Issue No. 19] p312

³ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 15 August 1843 [Issue No.68] p1048

⁴ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 10 June 1851 [Issue No.64] p902

⁵ *The Australian* 5 May 1842 p3

⁶ Comboyne Basalt is a magnesium-rich form of the hard volcanic rock formed from cooling lava flows

⁷ Robert Dixon. *Map of the Colony of New South Wales*. J. Cross, London, 1837

⁸ Richard Thompson. *Map of a portion of North Eastern Australia*. R. Clint, Sydney, 1842; *The Australian* 28 May 1842 p2

⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald* 26 September 1856 p3

¹⁰ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 20 July 1852 [Issue No. 73] p1115

¹¹ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 14 August 1848 [Issue No. 87 (Supplement)] p1001

¹² NSW Land and Property Information: Historical Land Records Viewer; Parish of Salway, County of Vernon, Walcha Land District 1887 [<http://images.maps.nsw.gov.au/pixel.htm>]

¹³ Jim Young, proprietor of ‘Sallywood’ – personal communication

¹⁴ Geographical Names Board of New South Wales; Reference 46439

¹⁵ *New South Wales Government Gazette* 17 April 1882 [Issue No. 154 (Supplement)] p2134

¹⁶ Nowendoc National Park, Ngulin Nature Reserve and Tuggolo Creek Nature Reserve: Plan of Management. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2012.

¹⁷ Vic Galvin, Walcha Historical Society – personal communication

¹⁸ State Archives NSW: Surveyor General; NRS 13736, Letters received from surveyors 1822 – 1855, [2/1569B] *Ralfe to Mitchell 28 April 1835*

¹⁹ State Archives NSW: Surveyor General; NRS 13859, Crown Plans 1792 – 1886, [3237 – 3244] Ralfe. *Ranges, Apsley and Port Macquarie*

²⁰ State Archives NSW: Surveyor General; NRS 13859, Crown Plans 1792 – 1886, [3239] Ralfe. *Ranges, Apsley and Port Macquarie*

²¹ Surveyor General’s Circular to Surveyors 1 January 1836. In: *Marking the landscape – a short history of survey marks in New South Wales*. (I. H. Marshall, Ed) 2nd edn. p15. NSW Land and Property Information, 2002.

²² State Archives NSW: Surveyor General; NRS 13859, Crown Plans 1792 – 1886, [3234 - 3236] Ralfe. *Part of Barnard River and Range*

²³ State Archives NSW: Surveyor General; NRS 13859, Crown Plans 1792 – 1886, [3246] Darcy. *Plan of country between Port Macquarie, Port Stephens and Including Karuah River*

²⁴ NSW Land and Property Information: Spatial Information Exchange, SIX Maps [<http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>]

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and on the common toll road at Scott's station, were required. It is not clear whether these repairs were to fencing or the road itself; however, road repairs were a recurring theme over the next decade.

George Selleck died on 23 January 1869,⁸ and it is only after his death that the name *Sellecks Flat* appears in print. At the Buninyongshire Council meeting of 3 February 1870, a petition from persons on *Sellick's Flat* for reduction of tolls was read.⁹ Unfortunately for the petitioners, the matter was outside the power of the council. (This is the earliest record of the name that I could find on Trove. The most recent was in January 1878.)

A few months later, on 26 May 1870, *Cr Lamb* presented a petition from ratepayers at *Sellecks Flat*, asking that a cutting might be made on the road near Eason's.¹⁰ This was the first of a number of petitions and letters regarding the state of roads and drainage at or near *Sellecks Flat*, but none gives a clear location.

Eason and Eason's lane are mentioned in many of the petitions and letters. The Eason family were early residents of Buninyong. Their property, 'Glencoe', which is still held by the family, is on the 'Suburban Allotments' just east of the surveyed township, some distance north of the Geelong road. Despite this, I've been unable to determine the location of Eason's lane. Today there is an Easons Road south-west of Buninyong Township, but this is clearly not the roadway referred to in connection with *Sellecks Flat*.

It seems that the Councillors weren't all that interested in the residents of *Sellecks Flat*; most such requests were deferred until the next meeting, and then deferred again. For example, on 29 February 1872, a request for repairs opposite the old Mount toll-gate leading to *Sellick's Flat* was to lie on the table until the next meeting,¹¹ at which it was resolved to postpone consideration of the matter.¹² This does imply, however, that *Sellecks Flat* was beyond the toll-gate.

A further clue was given in a notice of an auction sale. On 11 May 1871, the Sheriff was to hold an auction on the Ground, situate at *Selleck's Flat*, opposite G Eason's, and adjoining *Murphy's Paddock*, about one mile from the *Buninyong Toll-gate*, off the *Geelong road*.¹³ (Unfortunately, the notice doesn't tell us in which direction.) According to the Parish Plan, an E. Murphy owned land west of

...Finding Sellecks Flat

George Selleck, with present-day Finns Road between them, but this was quite some distance east of Eason's property.

Another, unrelated, clue was given on the same day when Buninyongshire Council received a petition from a number of ratepayers at *Scott's Marsh*, *Sellick's Flat*, and *Williamson's Creek*, asking for the cutting of a drain in Eason's lane, to give them access to the main road.¹⁴ Both *Scotts Marsh* and *Williamsons Creek* were east of Buninyong, so this placed *Sellecks Flat* in the same general direction.

These items clearly indicate that Angus's original location (which is one mile south-east of the toll-gate) was correct, but then...

Fools' Gold

In November 1871, *The Ballarat Star* reported that several shafts have been sunk by a party of miners in the vicinity of *Selleck's Flat*, as it was thought on the gutter now worked by the *Defiance and Independent Companies*.¹⁵ These two mining companies' workings were on the north side of Geelong Road, very close to Eason's property. They were partly within the township but extended some distance to the east beyond the township boundary toward the foot of Mount Buninyong.

This report casts doubt on Scotsburn being the location of *Sellecks Flat*, as it *could* mean that *Sellecks Flat* was near the intersection of present-day Mount Buninyong Road and Blackberry Lane. The *Defiance Extended Company's* shaft is in this area and the *Independence* shaft only a short distance away. There is a relatively small flat and marshy tract of land at this point (and the word *flat* also means marsh).

To add to the uncertainty, this area is also one mile from the toll-gate, though in a north-westerly direction. Also, as far as can be determined, no mining activity ever took place at the Scotsburn site identified by Angus.

Trove revealed a few other reports that mentioned *Sellecks Flat*, but none was any help in confirming the location. While the *Cobblers Gully/Magpie* area could safely be eliminated, there were still two possible sites that fitted the available information. Which one was the real *Sellecks Flat*?

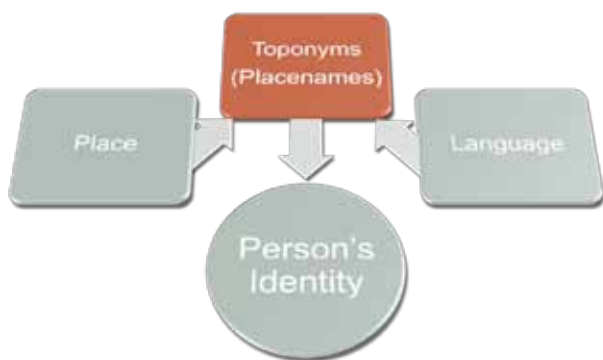
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Toponymy 101 H...

Placenames play important roles in various areas of life: cartography, geography, history, the naming and defining of our world, economics, government and politics, delivery of services, and emergency services, and so on. One area I have not yet covered—but which I hinted at in ‘Toponymy 101 C: The power of placenames’—is the role placenames play in marking our identity. And they do this at the individual, social, and regional/national levels. Even though this function is perhaps psychologically most important and lies closest to our hearts, it is nevertheless often overlooked. Placenames trigger a mental relationship between the users of the name and the named places.

Some quite natural questions people ask about themselves and others are: Who are you? Where have you been? Where do you come from? Where do you belong? Where do your allegiances lie?

Why do these questions matter to us? Well, they help identify a person and define who they are. A person’s identity is defined by many things, but two of them are *place* (of origin, residence etc.) and *language variety*. Toponyms allow these two dimensions to be communicated.



They may also help communicate a person’s possible ethnicity, nationality and social class. Place of birth is also one of the most often-required pieces of personal information on official forms. The combination of someone’s name, date of birth, and place of birth is close to being a unique identifier of that person, and is linked with them all their lives.

Cultural identity

In many cultures, placenames are more important cultural and personal identifiers than in many western societies. In Australian Aboriginal cultures for instance,

placenames are mnemonic devices that carry knowledge passed from generation to generation. They are the story maps that connect people to place and act as a guide to get from one place to another (song-lines). In such an oral society, the names chosen for geographical sites carry history, traditional environmental/ecological knowledge, navigational information, and teachings. Using these names keeps all of that information alive. Placenames also embody a sense of belonging to a place, coexistence with the natural world, and the longstanding relationship between a people and their place—they anchor the past to the present (Kostanski, 2016). The notion of ‘country’ and caring for country is one of the most significant parts of Aboriginal life, and connection to country is seen as an inseparable part of Aboriginal identity. Unfortunately, most Indigenous placenames were ignored and lost after colonisation, and their spiritual and cultural meanings were expunged (Furphy, 2001). Moreover, many indigenous placenames were displaced to regions not connected with them, thereby further alienating those names and meanings from their people.¹ However, a growing trend of using Aboriginal placenames has begun to emerge. This will, to a small degree, help to preserve some Indigenous languages and act as a guide to the teaching of generations yet to come.

A similar close connection between people and placenames is found among the Indigenous peoples of Fiji and New Zealand. When I lived in Fiji, I noticed that one of the first things that unacquainted Fijians asked one another when introduced was what their native (paternal) village was (even though nowadays many have never set foot in it). The answer to this question lies at the heart of Fijian cultural identity. Where the mother is from is sometimes asked about, but it is of secondary importance. The name of one’s native (paternal) village is essential in determining that person’s clan, kinship, and allegiances.

Māori placenames were often coined as descriptions of geographic features, or from circumstances that influenced the naming process. These placenames convey particular cultural values to those who are familiar with them. The Māori placename, therefore, stands as a reminder not only of the history of who came there first, but of a bond of common ancestry between proximate peoples, allowing for extensions of trade and goodwill between them. The importance of Māori placenames

...Placenames as Identity Markers

to Māori identity, history, social relations and political relations is therefore paramount (Reuter 2006: 13).²

Personal identity

Many placenames are eponymous, meaning they were derived from people's names (e.g. *Darwin*, *Tasmania*, *Frenchs Forest*, *Bennelong Point*, *Leeman* etc.); but the reverse also happens, where a placename may generate a personal or family name based or derived from a particular place.³ In various European countries many family names have what is termed a 'nobiliary particle' to signal the nobility of a family (or at least the semblance of it, because such names were often adopted by commoners as well). The particle is usually in the form of the preposition *of* (or *van*, *von*, *de* in Dutch, German and French respectively). Such names often designate an ancestor's place of origin, for instance: *Richard of Shrewsbury*, *Rembrandt van Rijn*, *Josef von Sternberg*, *Giscard d'Estaing*, *Simon de Montfort*, etc. And of course the British royal family adopts toponymic names, not only in their titles, but as their family names, e.g. *Windsor*, *Wales*, and *Cambridge*. These sorts of names are termed 'oikonymic' (i.e. personal names associated with the names of inhabited places).

However, toponymic family names without a 'nobiliary particle' are also common: *Holland*, *Kent*, *York*, *Ireland*, *Britain*, *Ainsley*, *Lincoln*, *Luxemburg*, *Aquino*, etc. According to the Dutch Meertens Instituut my own family name is derived from *De Tenten* ('The Tents'), the name of a tiny hamlet near the village of Grootegast in the province of Groningen.⁴ My family has its roots in this very region. And in the Basque Country, the vast majority of surnames on that country's Atlantic side are also oikonymic (Nieto 2007).

In some Aboriginal societies, a deceased person may be commonly referred to by their place of death, perhaps in the form of a suffix, as in Warlpiri with *-wana* 'general locative' (Myers, 1991:132). Exceptionally, on Rote Island in Indonesia (*Pulau Rote*) a person cannot be referred to or defined by reference to place. Then in yet other cultures, as Fox says, 'places may take on the attributes of persons, and persons the attributes of a place. The interconnection is basic and thus place names can provide a useful starting point for the study of proper names.' (Fox 2006: 89). Fox declares that it is

often difficult to distinguish placenames from personal names, and that both cohere to form a combination of genealogy and topogeny.⁵

These days, in Western societies, toponyms seem to be coming more popular in naming and are the inspiration for given names such as *Indi*,⁶ *Madison*, *Dakota*, *Israel*, *Florence*, *Georgia*, *Virginia*, and *Orlando*, to name but a few.

In a review of studies conducted on the effect of a person's name and their identity, Dion (1983), reports that diverse research has shown a correlation between the two. And given that placenames are a common source of personal and family names, it follows that placenames will influence a person's sense of identity too.

Regional and national identity

Placenames also contribute to the feeling of belonging to a social group in a particular area. Two important studies have been conducted that look at this phenomenon, Windsor (2013) and Kostanski (2009). Both their PhD theses deal in part with community 'sense of place' and with the notion of belonging to a regional community.

Country or region of origin is often a source of great pride and identity. The frequent practice of British colonists to name places in Australia and New Zealand after their own places of origin is testament not only to this, also but to Jacquetta Hawkes' view (Hawkes (1951): 'Place names are among the things that link men most intimately with their territory'.

Sporting teams often derive their names from the toponym of their location (locally, regionally, or nationally), e.g. *Parramatta Eels*, *Cronulla Sharks*, *Collingwood Magpies*, *Adelaide Crows*, *West Coast Eagles*, *Central Coast Mariners*, and *Western Sydney Wanderers*. Such names are rallying points or calls for team supporters who often fervently identify with a team and its name. In this way, placenames can be emblematic of tribalism.

Placenames are also fundamental to a nation's identity. The choice of a nation's name or decisions on the names for its major cities are potent and compelling signifiers of national identity. In my earlier article on 'The power of placenames', I outlined some of the politics and motivations of renaming places. Post-colonial and post-regime placename changing heralds new national

continued next page

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...Placenames as Identity Markers

and political identity and image. National identity lies behind all these renamings, just as much as it does behind disputed names and regions.

Changing a placename (even the removal or addition of a letter) often displeases people who associate themselves with that name (Guyot & Seethal, 2007; Kostanski 2009). Placenames are indelible symbols, and as such are central attributes of national, territorial, and personal identity (Arseny, 2003). Undoubtedly one of the inherent properties of placenames is their ability to create a feeling of belonging to a certain community.

Endnotes

- ¹ Examples include: Brindabella (NSW) to Brindabella (VIC), Warragamba (NSW) to Warragamba (VIC), and Toongabbie (NSW) to Toongabbie (VIC).
- ² See also for instance: 'Ko wai au? Ko wai tātou? Ko wai rātou? / Who am I? Who are we? Who are they?' The Wireless. <<http://thewireless.co.nz/articles/ko-wai-au-ko-wai-tatou-ko-wai-ratou-who-am-i-who-are-we-who-are-they>>
- ³ See for example: Droege (1955).
- ⁴ The Meertens Instituut is part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, which investigates diversity in language and culture in the Netherlands, see <<http://www.meertens.nl/>>.
- ⁵ A topogeny is an ordered succession of recited placenames, and is analogous to the recitation of a genealogy. Indeed, among Austronesian-speaking people, topogenies can be as common as genealogies.
- ⁶ Indi Mitchell, eldest daughter of Elyne Mitchell (author of the Silver Brumby series), was named after the Indi River. Indi named her Victorian rural property Brindabella after the Brindabella west of Canberra.

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Jan Tent

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...from page 7

...Finding Sellecks Flat

Confirmation

Both Angus and I had previously sought help from the Buninyong & District Historical Society, but the records we saw on our visits had yielded few clues. While I was making a later visit, however, noted local historian Dr Anne Beggs-Sunter arrived. She found records of the Deering family, including the baptisms of Thomas and his siblings. These showed the family as living at Scotts Marsh, which effectively eliminated the Mount Buninyong Road/Blackberry Lane area.

Unless some indisputable evidence (such as a map showing the name) emerges, we may never know the precise location of Sellecks Flat, but I believe the area around the present Scotsburn school and public hall is the most likely answer. This is the location that Angus gave in his book. He and I used different routes to arrive at the same place, so it's highly likely that we've found the right spot.

Endnotes

- ¹ Lost & Almost Forgotten Towns of Colonial Victoria, Angus B Watson (Angus B Watson, 2003), p.401
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid, p.398
- ⁴ Ibid, p.398 & 401
- ⁵ Three Times Blest, A history of Buninyong and District 1837 - 1901, Peter M Griffiths (Buninyong & District Historical Society, 1988), p.43
- ⁶ The Star, 29 July 1862
- ⁷ The Star, 30 December 1864
- ⁸ The Leader, 30 January 1869
- ⁹ The Ballarat Star, 4 February 1870
- ¹⁰ The Ballarat Courier, 27 May 1870
- ¹¹ The Ballarat Star, 1 March 1872
- ¹² The Ballarat Star, 15 March 1872
- ¹³ The Ballarat Star, 11 May 1871
- ¹⁴ The Ballarat Star, 12 May 1871
- ¹⁵ The Ballarat Star, 7 November 1971

Ron Woods
with Angus B. Watson

Placenames Puzzle Number 64

A pronunciation puzzle

Can you pronounce these placenames?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Goonoo Goonoo (NSW) <i>vs</i> Woolloomooloo (NSW) | 10. Boulia (QLD) |
| 2. Wauchope (NSW) <i>vs</i> Wauchope (NT) | 11. Bicheno (TAS) |
| 3. Tallangatta (VIC) <i>vs</i> Wangaratta (VIC) | 12. Ubirr (NT) |
| 4. Koetong (VIC) | 13. Tonkley Onkley (NSW) |
| 5. Cooinda (NT) | 14. Alagala (NSW) |
| 6. Tangambalanga (VIC) | 15. Tumbulgum (NSW) |
| 7. Nariel (VIC) | 16. Canowindra (NSW) |
| 8. Wee Waa (NSW) | 17. Khancoban (NSW) |
| 9. Colac Colac (VIC) | 18. Acheron (VIC) |
| | 19. Forster (NSW) |
| | 20. Ouyen (VIC) |

[Compiled by: **Jan Tent**]

20. **oh-yuh-n** ['oʊjən]
19. **fo-s-tuh** ['fɒstə]
18. **ak-uh-ruh-n** ['ækərən]
17. **kan-koh-buh-n** ['kæn'kɒbən]
16. **kuh-n-ow-n-druh** ['kɒn'naʊndrə]
15. **tum-bul-guh-m** ['tʌm'bʌlgəm]
14. **al-uh-guh-lah** ['æləgə'lə]
13. **toohk-leeh-ong-kleeh** ['tu:kli'npkli]
12. **oh-beer-eh** ['oʊ'bɪəri]
11. **bish-uh-noh** ['bɪʃ'noʊ]
10. **bool-ee-yuh** ['bʊlije]

9. **klak-klak** ['klæk'klæk]
8. **wew-waw** ['wi'wɔ]
7. **na-ree-uh-l** ['nəriəl]
6. **rang-gam-buh-lang-guh** ['ræŋgæm'bʌl'æŋgə]
5. **kuh-lin-duh** ['ke'lɪndʌ]
4. **kooh-eh-tong** ['kʊh'tɒŋ]
- vs* **wang-guh-rar-uh** ['wæŋgə'rəri]
3. **tuh-lang-guh-ruh** ['tʌl'æŋgə'rɪ]
- vs* **wawk-up** ['wɔ:kʌp]
2. **waw-hohp** ['wɔ:hoʊp]
1. **gun-uh-guh-uug** ['nu:g'eʊŋg]

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