

# Placenames Australia

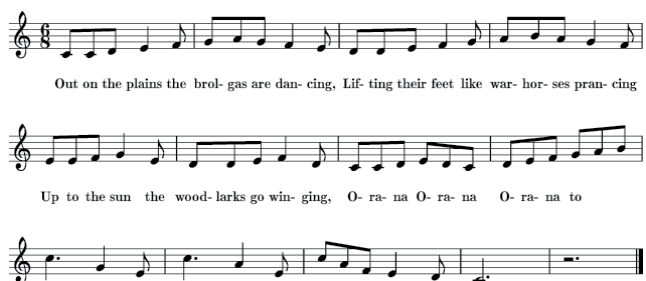
Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

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



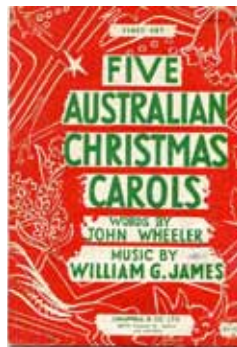
## Orana -- an Australian welcome for a Polynesian word?

Many of us who remember the 1960s in Australia know the chorus 'Orana! Orana! Orana to Christmas Day' in one of the popular Australianised seasonal songs of the period. The lyricist of 'Carol of the Birds', ABC staff writer John Wheeler (fl. 1940–70, with composer William Garnet 'Billy' James 1892–1977), likely found the word *Orana* in one of the notorious naming booklets popular at the time: *Orana*, 'welcome', has been listed in many of them as an Aboriginal word of NSW, beginning with Thorpe (1921:5) but followed by many others (see table below). The carol in question was in the first set of *Five Australian Christmas carols*, released for Christmas 1948<sup>1</sup>, which implies that Wheeler's source was one of the Thorpe or Tyrrell booklets published before WWII. It may well have been that, to Wheeler, 'Orana' in the chorus had an appealing resonance with the Biblical 'Hosanna'.



In the 1970s *Orana* got another boost in New South Wales, from official naming:

ORANA, an Aboriginal word meaning 'welcome' and, since 1972, the name of a region in New South Wales. The Orana Region (formerly North–Western Region) covers roughly the central third of the State's northern half. (*The Australian Encyclopaedia*<sup>2</sup>)



Thereupon a number of business names<sup>3</sup> in the region incorporated *Orana*, and its 'capital', Dubbo, has the Orana Mall—'the premier shopping centre in the Central West ... servicing the Region since 1979', claims the Mall's website. As it happens, the Geographical Names Board of NSW has since 2007 been considering the formalisation of 'Orana' as a NSW region name, but has not yet approved it.<sup>4</sup>

The next development was that Wiradjuri, the language of the country around Dubbo, was somehow taken to be the source of the word:

The Orana, meaning 'Welcome' in Wiradjuri, is the largest and most diverse region in the State.<sup>5</sup>

However, I have not been able to find any Australian record of Orana other than in those 1920s booklets. Salutations are not usual in Australian languages (that is, the languages usually don't have a word that is primarily a salutation); in particular, the 19th century Wiradjuri wordlists don't have a match for Orana, and Wiradjuri words typically don't begin with a vowel. These days Wiradjuri people use *gawaymbanha* 'welcome, tell to come'<sup>6</sup>.

*continued on page 5*

## From the Editor



forgotten Part 2 of Paul Geraghty's exploration of the

You may well detect a rather Oceanic flavour about this issue. First of all, David Nash's lead article on the origin of *Orana* takes us to the Pacific. Then Jan Tent guides us through the pronunciation of Oceanic placenames. (We haven't

Fijian island of Taveuni: that will come in September.) Page 10 sees another item in our new series, 'We Thought You'd Never Ask'—after treating *Woolloomooloo* in our previous issue, Jeremy Steele has given us *Bondi* this time. What other placenames have you often wondered about? We eagerly await requests!

**David Blair**  
<editor@anps.org.au>

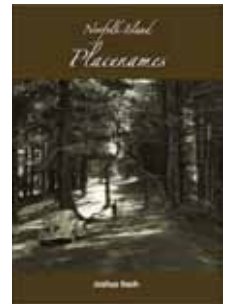
## We recommend...

In a book just published last month, David Nash has a chapter which will be of interest to many of our readers: 'Placenames evidence for NSW Pidgin: Bulga, Nyrang'. The book is *Loss and renewal: Australian languages since colonisation*, edited by Felicity Meakins and Carmel O'Shannessy (published by De Gruyter Mouton).



And Joshua Nash (no relation!) has given ANPS a copy of his beautifully illustrated booklet on the placenames of Norfolk Island. It's waiting here for the first reader to email the Editor! For everyone else, there's a PDF version on the ANPS website, to download:

[www.anps.org.au/documents/NI.pdf](http://www.anps.org.au/documents/NI.pdf)



## Notes and queries

### Dolls Point

We were asked in one of our ABC radio sessions about the origin of **Dolls Point**, a feature on the shore of Botany Bay and now the name of the nearby suburb. We're aware of an old story that the point was named after an escaped convict who hid in the area, but we can't substantiate this. The first record of the name is on a survey plan in 1833. If the convict story has any basis in fact, that document plan would narrow the date down to the time of transportation. Records show that there were at least three convicts surnamed Doll who arrived in Sydney between 1806 and 1822 (two named John and one named Samuel), so perhaps this suggested origin is not really so far-fetched. If you know any more, do let us know!

### Penwhaupell

Our reader Lyn Grimes has asked about **Penwhaupell**, a locality in Queensland. It began as a large property taken up by Thomas Gray in 1896 when it probably

already bore that name. We've located several contemporary newspaper reports of Thomas Gray and his property, but nothing about the earlier stage. We wonder if the name was 'transported' from an earlier landowner's home in Cornwall or Wales—we (and Lyn) would appreciate any suggestions!

### The Canning saga continues...

The Australian Electoral Commission says the **Canning electorate** (WA) was named after surveyor Alfred Canning. A sceptical Ian Murray wrote to say that he believed that all the Canning toponyms (district and river included) honoured George Canning, Prime Minister of England. But we now have further correspondence from the West: Alex George believes that the Canning River and the City of Canning were named after Charles John Canning, the *son* of PM George Canning. As part evidence, he tells us that the city's coat of arms is adopted from the arms of Charles Canning, not from those of his father.

This newsletter is published quarterly by  
Placenames Australia Inc ABN 39 652 752 594  
ISSN: 1836-7968 (print) 1836-7976 (online)

Editor: David Blair  
PO Box 5160  
SOUTH TURRAMURRA NSW 2074

# What you see is not always what you get

or, a brief lesson in how to pronounce some toponyms from the Pacific<sup>1</sup>

When we see foreign words and toponyms rendered in Roman script, we tend to forget that their pronunciation will not always conform to our expectations. Paul Geraghty's articles on Fijian placenames reminded me of this, says **Jan Tent**.

Oceanic languages (of which Fijian is one) tend not to have as many vowels and consonants as English. But some of the consonant sounds they have can be quite different to English ones. And unlike English, they tend to have a relatively simple and regular syllable structure, e.g. (Vowel) + Consonant + Vowel.<sup>2</sup> (I am talking here about pronunciation, not spelling!). This means a word may consist of a vowel by itself, two vowels or three (e.g. *Hiva Oa* and *Uea*)<sup>3</sup>, or start with a vowel followed by a consonant and another vowel (*Ofu*), or start with a consonant followed by a vowel. The latter two sequences may extend over a number of syllables (*Ovalau*, *Moturiki*). There tend to be no clusters of consonants (i.e. sequences of consonants without an intervening vowel) as we have in English.

Fijian, like many Melanesian and African languages, also has what are called 'prenasalised stops'. This means that the stop sounds /b/, /d/, and /g/ generally have a nasal sound preceding them, giving /<sup>m</sup>b/, /<sup>n</sup>d/ and /<sup>ŋ</sup>g/ (the /ŋ/ being the nasal sound we hear in the English word *sing*). These sounds are not considered to be, for example, /m/ + /b/ consonant clusters, but single sounds. You hear the nasal, but it is perceived to be part of the stop sound, so they are rendered in the spelling simply as *b*, *d* and *q*.

'Why the *q* spelling?' I hear you ask. Although English allows single sounds to be represented in its spelling by digraphs (i.e. two letters) (e.g. the /ŋ/ in *sing*, the /ð/ in *there*, the /f/ in *cough*, etc.), Fijian spelling doesn't because it's reflecting the fact that it does not have consonant clusters in its pronunciation. The Fijian orthography (i.e. spelling system) was cleverly devised by the Methodist missionaries David Cargill and William Cross in 1835 so that it represented as closely as possible the way the language was pronounced. The Fijian orthography remains one of the best phonic spelling systems in the world.

So, if the stop sound /g/ needs to be prenasalised and then represented by a single letter, what do we do given that the /ŋ/ sound also occurs in Fijian?

Cargill and Cross had a useful solution to hand. Since English had more letters in its alphabet (or orthography)

than Fijian had distinct sounds, they had some letters (moveable type) in their type case to spare. Since the letter *q* was spare, the solution was to use the letter *q* to represent the /<sup>ŋ</sup>g/ sound, and the letter *g* to represent the /ŋ/ sound. Hence we get Fijian toponyms and words spelled with a *q* (*Beqa* /be<sup>ŋ</sup>ga/, *Qata* /<sup>ŋ</sup>gata/) and with a *g* (*Sigatoka* /sɪŋatoka/, *Galoa* /ŋaloa/) which do not have the same pronunciation as the same letters in English. Quite a few Polynesian languages, in fact, use *g* to represent /ŋ/.



This explains why names like *Nadi* are pronounced as /næ<sup>n</sup>dɪ/ and not /nædɪ/. The Sydney suburb of *Lakemba* is named after the Fijian island *Lakeba*, pronounced /lake<sup>m</sup>ba/. Since English doesn't have prenasalised stops and allows consonant clusters, we render the name with an *m* in our spelling.

But wait—we're not done yet with Fijian. Numerous toponyms and words are spelled with the letter *c*. This was another spare letter in the movable type case, so Cargill and Cross used it to represent the sound /ð/ (as in *there* and *heather*); so we have *Moce* /moðe/, *Cakau Vatulaca* /ðakau βatulaða/ etc.

Many Pacific languages have a closing quotation mark or apostrophe ( ' ) in their spelling systems, and you will see names such as *'Uvea*, *Vava'u*, *O'ahu*, and even *Hawai'i*. This symbol represents a glottal stop /ʔ/, which is a consonant. The glottal stop is the sound you hear (or rather don't hear!) in the Cockney rendering of *butter* as /bʌʔə/.<sup>6</sup>

*continued next page...*

# What you see is not always what you get...

...from previous page

Many words and toponyms in Māori contain a *wh* in their spelling. We might think that this is pronounced as /w/. But no—in Māori it is pronounced as a /ϕ/ (i.e. a voiceless bilabial fricative).<sup>4</sup> Hence, we have names such as *Whangarei* /ϕaŋareɪ/, *Whangarā* /ϕaŋara:/.<sup>5</sup> (Notice also that Māori spelling has not adopted the single symbol for the /ŋ/ sound, but uses *ng* instead.)

Unfamiliar spellings (at least to an English reader) are found also in Micronesia. For instance, the nation name *Kiribati* is pronounced /kɪrɪbas/ not /kɪrɪbati/. The country (which has a total land area of 800 square kilometres dispersed over 3.5 million square kilometres) derives its name from its old colonial name *Gilbert Islands*. *Kiribati* is the local way of writing *Gilberts*. Since the Kiribati language (also known as ‘Gilbertese’) does not have a /g/ sound, but does have a /k/ (very closely related to /g/), the *G* of *Gilberts* is rendered as a *K*. Likewise, the language lacks the /l/ sound, but does have a close equivalent, /r/, so the *l* in *Gilberts* is rendered as *r*. An intervening vowel is inserted between the *r* and *b*, because the language follows the Oceanic principle of generally not allowing consonant clusters.



Now, because the Kiribati language does not possess the phoneme /s/,<sup>7</sup> it had to resort to another method of representing this sound without having to introduce a new letter in their orthography. Luckily it does have a /t/ phoneme and when it occurs before the vowel /i/ they are together pronounced as /s/.<sup>8</sup> And that's how *Gilberts* becomes *Ki-ri-bati* /kɪrɪbas/. The nation also has an island as part of its dominion named *Kiritimati* which is derived, via the same process, from *Christmas (Island)* (not the one in the Indian Ocean that's sadly been in the news these last few years).



I hope I haven't perplexed you too much with the phonetics and phonology of Pacific island toponyms, and that you now have a better idea of how these and other words are pronounced.<sup>9</sup>

Jan Tent

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Sincere thanks to my good friend and colleague, Paul Geraghty, for ironing out a few errors and inconsistencies in an earlier version of this article.
- <sup>2</sup> When referring to vowels, I also include diphthongs (i.e. vowels formed whilst the tongue glides from one vowel position to another. They could well be called 'gliding vowels').
- <sup>3</sup> All examples are of toponyms.
- <sup>4</sup> A type of *f* sound produced between spread lips, not between the bottom lip and the top teeth as in English. New Zealand English speakers, however, pronounce the *wh* as /f/ as in *off*. Fijian also has a bilabial fricative, but it is voiced /β/. It is very similar to /v/, hence Cargill and Cross used the letter *v* to represent it. Most English speakers pronounce Fijian words containing *v* with a /v/.
- <sup>5</sup> *ā* represents a long "ah" sound.
- <sup>6</sup> The glottal stop is a type of consonantal sound produced by obstructing airflow in the vocal tract or, more precisely, the glottis (the space between the vocal folds). Although no actual sound is produced, nevertheless, it functions as a consonant in the sound system.
- <sup>7</sup> A 'phoneme' is a *minimal distinct* unit of sound within a language's sound system.
- <sup>8</sup> This specific process is called 'assibilation'. It refers to a sound change resulting in a sibilant consonant (e.g. an /s/ or /ʃ/). The word *assibilation* itself contains an example of the phenomenon, being pronounced /əsɪbɪleɪʃən/. The classical Latin *-tio* was pronounced /tiɔ/ (e.g. *assibilatō* was pronounced /asɪbɪlatiɔ/ and *attentiō* /atentiɔ/). However, in Vulgar Latin it assibilated to /tʃiɔ/, and this can still be seen in Italian: *attenzione*. In French, it resulted in /ʃjɔ/, which in English then became /ʃjəl/. The word *assibilation* is known as an 'autological' word (also called 'homological' word or 'autonym') because it expresses a property that it also possesses.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Phonetics' is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of the production (i.e. articulation) and the acoustic nature of human speech sounds. 'Phonology' on the other hand, deals with the relationships of individual sounds and clusters of sounds at the level of syllables and words.

## ...Orana: an Australian welcome?

...from page 1



In addition to the examples already given, during the 20th century *Orana* has been applied to name dozens of homesteads and other features of the built environment, as shown in the map above.

Without having looked into the origin of each of these, I expect that the namers have drawn on the booklets of the 1920s-70s.

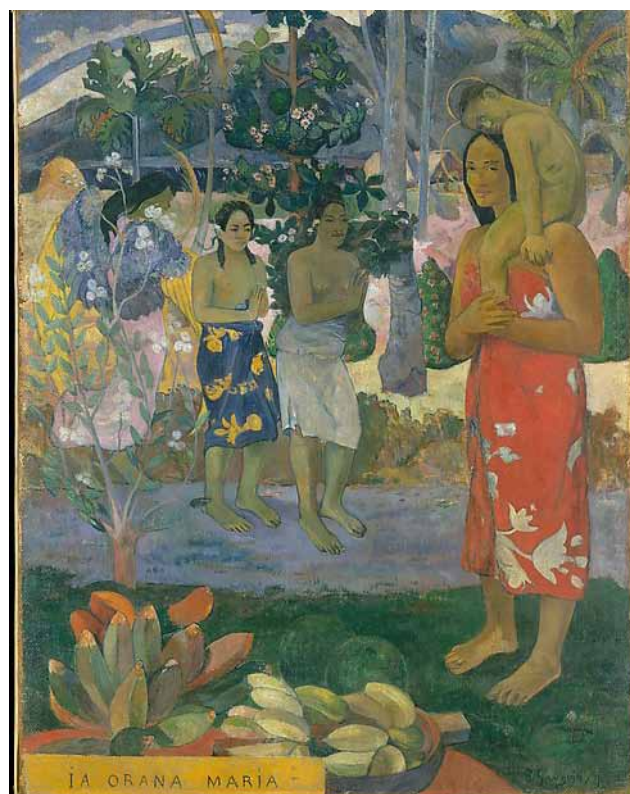
So where did Thorpe and the other compilers get *Orana* from, if not from an Australian language? Well, the word is commonplace in the Cook Islands, even to the Rarotongan greeting *Kia orāna*<sup>7</sup> being on their vehicle



photo: [http://www.delsjourney.com/images/news/news\\_01-12-10/1-8909-Cook-Islands-License-Plate.jpg](http://www.delsjourney.com/images/news/news_01-12-10/1-8909-Cook-Islands-License-Plate.jpg)

registration plates. Rarotongan *orāna* shares its stem with the Māori greeting *Kia ora!* But while *Kia ora* is somewhat known in Australia as a greeting, *orāna* is not, and *orāna* is not in Māori, and the Cook Islands are further away than New Zealand.

Even more distant is Tahitian *Ia Orana* 'Hello'. So how might the Tahitian expression have come to the attention of W.W. Thorpe when he was compiling his 1921 booklet in Sydney? Here's a possibility: the most famous use of *Orana* outside of Polynesia would have to be in *Ia Orana Maria* 'Hail Mary, Ave Maria', the title of Gauguin's 1891 painting<sup>8</sup> (which, we note, has its title



continued next page

...from previous page

prominently within it). Contributing to the painting's fame was that 'It was very radical for Western painting to have a brown Madonna and Child; as a matter of fact papal allowance for this was not given until 1951' according to one commentator.<sup>9</sup>

A young woman named Orana plays a central role in a story about Australians blackbirding through Pacific islands, 'The Kidnappers', which appeared in newspapers in 1898 and 1899<sup>10</sup>. While this is just a minor appearance of the word in print in Australia a few years after the news of Gaugin's 1891 painting, it does provide an example of one way the word arrived here.

### Crana

The same booklet that introduced *Orana* has just one other 'welcome' word, *Crana* (Thorpe 1921, 2). *Crana* occurs only in Thorpe and Tyrrell's booklets, in the 1920s and 1930s, and each also lists *Orana*, whereas

*Orana* occurs in a number of other booklets, to 1980, without *Crana* (see the table below). And just as for *Orana*, I have not been able to find any Australian record of *Crana* prior to the 1920s booklets. Hence I take *Crana* to have originated with a misreading of the initial letter of *Orana*.



The *Crana* entry appears to have been drawn upon in at least one instance.

Forrestfield Primary School opened in Perth in 1927, and *Crana* was added to the school crest:

In 1969/70 a competition was held for the design of a school crest. The present crest was the winning entry... The word 'CRANA' is Gaelic and was carried over from the original school and means 'WELCOME'. (<http://www.ffps.wa.edu.au/page/56/School-History>)

Yes, *Crana* is a Gaelic word in that it is the name of a river in Ireland, which has given its name to a town, and

decade	Orana 'Welcome'	absent	Crana 'Welcome'
1910s		Watkin 1914	
1920s	Thorpe 1921:5 Thorpe 1927:12	Endacott 1923	Thorpe 1921:2 Thorpe 1927:6
1930s	Tyrrell 1933:35 Thorpe 1938:12	Kenyon 1930 Anonymous 1937	Tyrrell 1933:17 Thorpe 1938:6
1940s	Cooper 1949:19	Endacott 1944	
1950s	Cooper 1952:21 McCarthy 1952:15 Sugden [1954] Endacott 1955:45 Onus 1956:4 Cooper 1957:20 McCarthy 1959:15	Kenyon 1951 Ingamells 1955	
1960s	Anonymous 1961:29 Cooper 1962:27 'to welcome' McCarthy 1963:15 Anonymous 1966:35 Anonymous 1969:4	Massola 1968 Reed 1969	Anonymous 1961:29 Anonymous 1966:35 Anonymous 1969:4
1970s	Reed 1970:71 McCarthy 1971:15 Endacott 1973:45 Reed 1977:213 Cooper 1979:27 'to welcome'		
1980s	Anonymous 1980	Kenyon 1982	

Table: Lineage of Orana 'Welcome', and Crana

# ...an Australian welcome?

for instance Crana College (founded 1925), on Crana Road, Bunrana, County Donegal. However there isn't a word like *crana* 'welcome' in Gaelic.

## Publication history

The table on the previous page shows the publication history of the two words in the naming booklets (and some newspaper reprints of excerpts). Notice that *Crana* was dropped from booklets after the 1930s, whereas *Orana* was retained through their period.

## Conclusion

In modern Australian usage **Orana** has gone feral (even more than **Akuna**, Nash 2014), and has been anonymised from its linguistic and geographic origins. It is unclear how it arrived from Polynesia.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Bown (2014) and Jeremy Steele for use of their lexical databases, and Geoscience Australia's *Gazetteer of Australia*. [This article is edited from a blog post, 'Orana: how did naming books welcome a Polynesian word as Australian?' on the *Endangered Languages and Cultures* site, [www.paradisec.org.au/blog](http://www.paradisec.org.au/blog), on 16 August 2015]

David Nash

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Catholic Weekly* 23 Dec 1948, page 2, Magazine Section.
- <sup>2</sup> From *The Australian Enclopaedia*, 1998, page 2169; and see reference Anonymous 1988.
- <sup>3</sup> There are fourteen business names in the region which are listed in the current Yellow Pages.
- <sup>4</sup> Greg Windsor (personal communication); and see reference Windsor 2013.
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.rdaorana.org.au/Orana.htm>
- <sup>6</sup> See the Wiradjuri Dictionary app released in June 2015: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id1009140355?mt=8>
- <sup>7</sup> Literally 'Be well', from *ora* (v.i.) 'Live, survive, (be) alive, living' <http://cookislandsdictionary.com>. From Proto Polynesian OLA. 1 'Be alive, well, healthy (not dead, ill)' <http://pollex.org.nz/entry/ola.1/>.
- <sup>8</sup> Image from: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/438821>
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.sedescorner.com/2011/05/paul-gauguin-hail-mary-or-larorana.html>
- <sup>10</sup> *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* 3 Dec 1898, page 6, and *Kalgoorlie Miner* 13 March 1899, page 7, reprinted from *The Australasian Pastoralists' Review* Vol VIII.

## References

- Anonymous. 1937. Aboriginal house names. *Chronicle (Adelaide)* 55. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92486622>.
- Anonymous. 1961. Aboriginal house names and their meanings. *Australian Women's Weekly* 2,28–29. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4830882>.
- Anonymous. 1966. Aboriginal house names and their meanings. *Australian Women's Weekly* 32–33,35. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4939793>.
- Anonymous. 1969. Pick a NAME that fits. *Home Beautiful mini-guide* 13.
- Anonymous. 1980. *Musical Aboriginal words: address book*. [Melbourne]: Dynamo House. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/34803420>.
- Anonymous. 1988. *The Australian encyclopaedia*. Terrey Hills, N.S.W.: Australian Geographic for the Australian Geographic Society, 5th edition.
- Bown, Claire. 2014. Data "big" and "small" — Examples from the Australian lexical database. *Linguistics Vanguard* <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/lingvan.ahead-of-print/lingvan-2014-1009/lingvan-2014-1009.xml?format=INT>.
- Cooper, H.M. 1949. *Australian Aboriginal words and their meanings*. Adelaide: South Australian Museum. <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/181988>.
- Cooper, H.M. 1952. *Australian Aboriginal words and their meanings*. [Adelaide]: South Australian Museum, 2nd ed. rev. and enlarged edition. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/22390169>.
- Cooper, H.M. 1957. *Australian Aboriginal words and their meanings*. Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 3rd edition.
- Cooper, H.M. 1962. *Australian Aboriginal words and their meanings*. Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 4th edition. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/24073699>.
- Cooper, H.M. 1979. *Australian Aboriginal words and their meanings*. Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 4th edition, reprinted.
- Endacott, Sydney J. 1923. *Australian Aboriginal native names and their meanings*. Melbourne: Sydney J. Endacott, 1st edition. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.aus-vn938496>.
- Endacott, Sydney J. 1944. *Australian Aboriginal native words and their meanings*. Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 4th ed edition. <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/133262>.
- Endacott, Sydney J. 1955. *Australian Aboriginal words and place names and their meanings*. Melbourne: Georgian House, 9th enlarged edition. Reprinted with additions 1963.
- Endacott, Sydney John. 1973. *Australian Aboriginal words and placenames and their meanings*. Melbourne: Acacia Press, 10th edition.
- Ingamells, Rex. 1955. *Australian Aboriginal words: Aboriginal–English; English–Aboriginal*. Melbourne: Hallcraft Publishing Company.
- Kenyon, Justine. 1930. *The Aboriginal word book*. Melbourne: Lothian Publishing Company.
- Kenyon, Justine. 1951. *The Aboriginal word book*. Melbourne: Lothian Publishing Company, 2nd ed. completely revised.
- Kenyon, Justine. 1982. *The Aboriginal word book*. Melbourne, Sydney: Lothian Publishing Company.
- Massola, Aldo. 1968. *Aboriginal place names of south-east Australia and their meanings*. [Melbourne]: Lansdowne.
- McCarthy, Frederick D. 1952. *New South Wales Aboriginal place names and euphonious words, with their meanings*. Sydney: A. H. Pettifer, Govt. Printer. URL <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-5736012>.

*continued next page*

...from previous page

McCarthy, Frederick D. 1959. *New South Wales Aboriginal place names and euphonious words, with their meanings*. Sydney: The Australian Museum, 3rd edition.

McCarthy, Frederick D. 1963. *New South Wales Aboriginal place names and euphonious words, with their meanings*. Sydney: The Australian Museum, 4th edition.

McCarthy, Frederick D. 1971. *New South Wales Aboriginal place names and euphonious words, with their meanings*. Sydney, N.S.W.: Australia Museum, 5th edition.

McCarthy, Frederick D., and W.W. Thorpe. 1943. *New South Wales Aboriginal place names and euphonious words, with their meanings*. Sydney: A.H. Pettifer, Acting Govt. Printer, [4th ed.] edition. [Based on the original compilation of W.W. Thorpe, first published in 1921.]

Nash, David. 2014. What flows from *ngaka-rna* — how naming books spread a Dieri word. *Placenames Australia: Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey* 1,7–9. [http://www.anps.org.au/documents/Dec\\_2014.pdf](http://www.anps.org.au/documents/Dec_2014.pdf). [See also a longer blog version: <http://www.paradisec.org.au/blog/2014/07/what-flows-from-ngaka-rna-how-naming-books-spread-a-dieri-word/>]

Onus, Mary. 1956. Aboriginal house names. *The Australian Home Beautiful* 53.

Reed, A.W. 1969. *Aboriginal words of Australia*. Terrey Hills, N.S.W.: paperback edition. [First published in clothbound edition 1965.]

Reed, A.W. 1970. *Aboriginal place names and their meanings*. Sydney: AH & AW Reed.

Reed, A.W. 1977. *Aboriginal words and place names*. Adelaide: Rigby. [Originally published as two separate works: *Aboriginal words of Australia*, Sydney: Reed, 1965 and *Aboriginal place names and their meanings*, Sydney: Reed, 1967.]

Sugden, Joah H. [1954]. *Aboriginal words and their meanings*. Sydney: Dymock's.

Thorpe, W.W. 1921. *List of New South Wales Aboriginal words and their meanings: with some well-known place names*. Sydney: Australian Museum, 1st edition.

Thorpe, W.W. 1927. *List of New South Wales Aboriginal place names and their meanings*. Sydney: Australian Museum, 2nd edition. URL <http://nla.gov.au/nla.aus-vn1890695>.

Thorpe, W.W. 1938. *List of New South Wales Aboriginal place names and their meanings*. Sydney: Australian Museum, 3rd edition (4th reprint). URL <http://nla.gov.au/nla.aus-vn3721657>.

Tyrrell, James R. 1933. *Australian Aboriginal place-names and their meanings*. Sydney: Simmons Limited. URL <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/11296687>, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001873124>.

Watkin, E.I. 1914. *Australian native words and their meanings*. Melbourne: Sydney J. Endacott.

Windsor, Greg. 2013. Developing effective techniques to derive regions for a community geography in NSW. PhD thesis, Charles Sturt University.



**David Nash** is a regular contributor to *Placenames Australia*. His most recent article was on The Speewah, in our March 2016 issue. He is a linguist specialising in the Aboriginal languages of Australia, and an expert on Warlpiri and other Northern Territory languages. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), and Visiting Fellow of the Australian National University, Canberra.

## The bridge with the longest name?



In June 2013 we reported that the longest bridge in Australia, 3.2 km in length, was under construction to cross the Macleay floodplain in northern NSW. The Dhanggati Language Group, as part of its work to revitalise the language, had proposed a ‘very long name’ as an appropriate way of highlighting the nature of the bridge.

That proposal has now come to pass, and the sign is there for all to see. Congratulations to the Dhanggati Language Group, and thanks to Amanda Lissarague for telling us of this success (and for sending us the photo to prove it!)

## The Oops! Corner

More than one reader spotted a slip in our previous issue’s *Reports from the Trenches* column. Melbourne’s Southern Cross Station was indeed formerly **Spencer Street Station**, not Flinders Street. Thanks to John Colville and Josh Nash, both quick off the mark!



*'If you want to make enemies, try to change something'*

*-Woodrow Wilson*

## Part 1

Placenames are so ubiquitous in our day-to-day lives that we rarely stop to consider the important role they play in society and the smooth running of that society. Most notably they are important to: navigation; delivery of post and goods; search and rescue operations; communications (including news media and weather reporting); disaster relief; cartography; national statistics (e.g. census taking); genealogy; tourism; security (including policing), intelligence gathering<sup>1</sup> and peace-keeping; property rights; business and trade; urban and regional planning; cadastre... the list goes on.

One of the first questions one is asked when meeting someone new is 'Where are you from?' The answer, your place of origin or residence, forms an integral part of your personal identity. But placenames are also fundamental to a nation's identity as well as its cultural and linguistic heritage, because they often encapsulate details about the geographic nature of a named feature, when it was named, and who bestowed it. They also offer insights into the belief and value systems of the name-givers, as well as the political and social circumstances at the time of naming (Tent & Slatyer, 2008a & b). And in many regions of the world, they reveal the chronology of exploration and settlement—Australia being an excellent example. In short, placenames and the history, geography, politics, economics and the linguistics of a region are all interconnected. So, therefore, with the current escalating tensions in the South China Sea, I thought it pertinent to consider the role placenames play in politics.

Firstly, naming a place is an ancillary to the appropriation of territory. For example, most names bestowed by the Dutch and the French between the 17th and early 19th centuries along the coast of Australia have been replaced by ones English explorers and colonists bestowed. But far more significantly, most indigenous Australian names have been ignored and/or replaced by introduced ones. Note, less than one third of the placenames found on maps of Australia have an indigenous element, and even fewer are fully and genuinely indigenous (Tent 2011).

There are many motivations for renaming a place. One present-day incentive is to reinstate indigenous names on significant sights and places by initially dual naming.

These have included *Uluru / Ayers Rock* and *Kata Tjuta / Mount Olga*. The background and history to dual naming in NSW is described by Greg Windsor (2009), who explains the policy was established in 2001, and that the first gazetted dual names were *Dawes Point / Tar-ra* in 2002 and *South Creek / Wianamatta* in 2003. Hodges (2007: 395) explains that these namings were followed in 2005 by a group of 20 more names on Sydney Harbour, based on the research of Attenbrow (2009).<sup>2</sup> And in 2012, there were calls for the renaming of Lake Eyre back to its indigenous name *Kati Thanda*, implemented last year.<sup>3</sup>

Other motives for renaming include the rezoning or merging of suburbs and shires etc., or the confederation or separation of states etc. Some places have been renamed because the original name was considered no longer socially appropriate.<sup>4</sup> For example, the recent move to rename Mount Niggerhead in Victoria.<sup>5</sup> Or the controversy surrounding the renaming of the E.S. 'Nigger' Brown Stand at Toowoomba Sports Ground.<sup>6</sup> Another nice example, from Spain, is the village of Asquerosa (literally 'disgusting, repulsive, revolting') which was renamed *Valderrubio* in 1943.

Sometimes, places get renamed for a publicity stunt or for sponsorship. The Victorian town of Speed was renamed for a short time to *SpeedKills*; and then there was the renaming of the North Queensland Cowboys rugby league team's home ground to *1300smiles Stadium*.<sup>7</sup> The town of Ismay (Montana, USA) unofficially took the name of *Joe, Montana*, after the NFL quarterback Joe Montana, as part of a 1993 publicity stunt. Not to be beaten, the town of Halfway (Oregon, USA) changed its name to *Half.com*, accepting money from a dot-com to change its name to match the web site 'Half.com'.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes a place is renamed by mistake. Recently Google Maps accidentally revived the name *Adolf-Hitler-Platz* in Berlin for the correct name *Theodor-Heuss-Platz*.<sup>9</sup>

However, the most common motivation for renaming is political—and we'll have to leave this aspect of placename-power until our next issue!

**Jan Tent**

*see references next page...*

...from previous page

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See for example: 'How the phone maps our real lives' <<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bydesign/how-the-phone-maps-our-real-lives/3192118>>
- <sup>2</sup> See also: Troy, Jakelin & Michael Walsh (2009). 'Reinstating Aboriginal placenames around Port Jackson and Botany Bay'. In Harold Koch & Luise Hercus (eds) *Aboriginal Placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. Aboriginal History Monograph 19. Canberra: ANU e-Press. pp. 55-70.
- <sup>3</sup> See *Placenames Australia* September 2012, p. 10.
- <sup>4</sup> See: 'Mapping wars' <<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/mapping-wars/3319462>>
- <sup>5</sup> See for example the following articles: 'Aboriginal group outraged over naming of mountain' <[http://www.theage.com.au/national/aboriginal-group-outraged-over-naming-of-mountain-20081117\\_68gq.html](http://www.theage.com.au/national/aboriginal-group-outraged-over-naming-of-mountain-20081117_68gq.html)>; 'Leave Mount Niggerhead and other names alone' <<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/42027/leave-mt-niggerhead-and-other-names-alone/>>; 'Aborigines oppose name change of Mt Niggerhead' <<http://in.reuters.com/article/2008/11/17/idINIndia-36534020081117>>
- <sup>5</sup> See: 'Nigger Brown gone Coon Cheese next' <<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/news/queensland/nigger-brown-gone-coon-cheese-next/2008/09/26/1222217491581.html>> 'Mapping wars' <<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/mapping-wars/3319462>>
- <sup>7</sup> See *Placenames Australia* September 2011, p. 11; 'North Queensland Cowboys' home ground to be renamed 1300SMILES Stadium' <<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/north-queensland-cowboys-home-ground-to-be-renamed-1300smiles-stadium/story-e6freoof1226581922831>>
- <sup>8</sup> See: 'City Changes Name to Half.com' <<http://geography.about.com/library/weekly/aa012400a.htm>>
- <sup>9</sup> See: 'Google apologises over reviving Adolf-Hitler-Platz in Berlin' <<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/jan/10/google-apologises-hitler-platz-berlin>>; 'Google Maps lists Berlin square as Adolf-Hitler-Platz' <<http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/1.568075>>;

'Berlin Blunder: Google Maps Brings Back Adolf Hitler Square' <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/google-maps-mistakenly-identifies-berlin-square-as-adolf-hitler-platz-a-942774.html>>; 'Google Maps Editor Lists Berlin Square as Adolf-Hitler-Platz' <<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2429422,00.asp>>

## References

- Attenbrow, Val (2009). 'Aboriginal placenames around Port Jackson and Botany Bay, New South Wales, Australia: Sources and uncertainties'. In Harold Koch & Luise Hercus (eds) *Aboriginal Placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. Aboriginal History Monograph 19. Canberra: ANU e-Press. pp. 9-54.
- Hodges, Flavia (2007). 'Language Planning and Placenames in Australia'. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 8, 3: 383-403.
- Kostanski, Laura (2006). 'That Name is OUR history: Divergent Histories of Place.' *School of Business Working Paper 2006/10* (PDF). Federation University. pp. 6-8. ISSN 1832-6846.
- Koch, Harold & Luise Hercus (eds) (2009). *Aboriginal Placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. Aboriginal History Monograph 19. Canberra: ANU e-Press
- Monmonier, Mark (2006). *From Squaw Tit to Whorehouse Meadow: How Maps Name, Claim and Inflamm*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226534657.
- Tent, Jan & Helen Slatyer (2008a). 'Early European place-naming practices in Australia, Part 1'. *Placenames Australia*. March, pp. 1, 3-4. <[http://anps.org.au/documents/March\\_2008.pdf](http://anps.org.au/documents/March_2008.pdf)>
- Tent, Jan & Helen Slatyer (2008b). 'Early European place-naming practices in Australia, Part 2'. *Placenames Australia*. June, pp. 1, 4-6. <[http://anps.org.au/documents/June\\_2008.pdf](http://anps.org.au/documents/June_2008.pdf)>
- Tent, Jan (2011). 'Indigenous vs introduced placenames in the Antipodes: A gazetteer-based study'. *Placenames Australia*. June, pp. 6-8. <[http://anps.org.au/documents/June\\_2011.pdf](http://anps.org.au/documents/June_2011.pdf)>
- Windsor, Greg (2009). 'The recognition of Aboriginal Place Names in New South Wales'. In Harold Koch & Luise Hercus (eds) *Aboriginal Placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. Aboriginal History Monograph 19. Canberra: ANU e-Press. pp. 71-86.

## We thought you'd never ask!

*Have you noticed how we often take some of Australia's most well-known placenames for granted? We assume they must be of Aboriginal origin; but we don't stop to think further about how they came to be. **Jeremy Steele** again takes up the challenge, to tell us more about these placenames.*

### Bondi

Tyrell and McCarthy are two of a number of people who compiled and published lists of Aboriginal placenames together with their meanings, and both give 'Water breaking over rocks' as the meaning for *Bondi*. Most such lists gave no indication of language, precise area, or source for the meaning. Tyrell and McCarthy both give the identical interpretation. Perhaps they are right. But is there anything in the records to suggest otherwise?

The first issue is that *Bondi* has the letters *-nd-* together. William Dawes, the greatest student of the Sydney

language at the time it was first encountered by Europeans, specifically stated that the somewhat similar consonantal combination *-nb-* was not permitted in the language, and that it was replaced by *-nm-*. He also indicated that *-nd-* was not used in Sydney either, although the same words did use the combination further inland.

However, in spite of Dawes' prescriptions, other *-nd-* words do occur in various Sydney and Dharug lists, which might give hints to as to the meaning of *Bondi*. A few examples follow. (Note that /o/ is not used in transcriptions for most Aboriginal languages, nor is /e/).

*continued next page...*

- bunda*: club
- bunda*: hawk
- banda-lag/bundu-lug*: rosella
- bunda*: apple tree [Angophora]
- bandi/bunda*: one of Bennelong's five names
- bunda/bundal*: names of Aboriginals of First Fleet times
- bunang/bundang*: knee

Of these, the birds ('hawk', 'rosella'), and 'apple tree' might have given their name to the locality by being present there; and lists for nearby languages such as Dharawal and Gundungara confirm the meanings for those words. 'Club', however, seems less likely. Knees (bunang/bundang) are seen as bending, and the shape of the bay in which Bondi occurs also makes 'bend' a possible interpretation.

If we search the other Sydney lists for forms in which *d* in the combination *-nd-* is omitted as Dawes stipulated, we find:

- banal*: sunshine
- bana*: rain
- bana*: knee

Finally, we should note that in the Sydney lists *Bunnabi*, *Bunnabee* and *Bunnabri* are given as the north head of Botany Bay. No meanings are provided for these names, but their form does slightly resemble 'Bondi', and the location is not very far away.

In conclusion, *Bondi* might indeed mean 'noise on rocks', even though the meaning is unsubstantiated. Or, if we prefer an idea based on a reliable source, the name might refer to the curved shape of the bay, as a 'knee' is bent.

## References

- McCarthy, F.D. *New South Wales Aboriginal Place Names and Euphonious Words, with Their Meanings*. Sydney: The Australian Museum, 1963.
- Tyrrell, James R. *Australian Aboriginal Place-Names and Their Meanings*. Sydney: Tyrrell's Pty. Ltd., 1933 (reprinted 1944, 1949, 1951, 1953).

## Placenames Puzzle Number 58

### Biblical figures

*Our clues refer to well-known figures from the Bible (from both the Old and New Testaments).*

*e.g. (QLD, reef) he was tested when every possible disaster happened to him and his family, though all was made right in the end... Job Reef*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (QLD, mountain) the first High Priest of the Israelites, and Moses' older brother and spokesman</li> <li>2. (QLD, creek) the disciple who kissed Jesus</li> <li>3. (TAS, lake) the progenitor complicit in the 'Fall of Man'</li> <li>4. (TAS, gorge) the shepherd who was the first murder victim</li> <li>5. (QLD, headland) he built a boat to save his family</li> <li>6. (WA, headland) God declared he would be known as the 'father of many nations'</li> <li>7. (WA, creek) he accompanied Moses on his ascent of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. (TAS, lake) hers is the most famous parthenogenesis of all</li> <li>9. (TAS, lake) the first temptress, and a palindrome too</li> <li>10. (TAS, mountain) he had a vision of a ladder reaching into heaven</li> <li>11. (QLD, river) he was almost sacrificed on the altar by his father Abraham</li> <li>12. (QLD, town) she hid her baby brother in the bulrushes; (poetic) valley.</li> <li>13. VIC, mountain) wife and half-sister of Abraham</li> <li>14. (QLD, mountain) the carpenter who travelled to Bethlehem for the census</li> <li>15. (QLD, creek) the first murderer</li> <li>16. (VIC, mountain) she favoured her younger son and planned her husband's deception</li> <li>17. (TAS, creek) Jacob's second wife</li> <li>18. (TAS, bay) the prophet whose journey to Nineveh had a fishy terminus</li> <li>19. (WA, mountain) the Bible's only female judge</li> <li>20. (QLD, mountain) he led the exodus of the Israelites</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

[Compiled by: **Jan Tent**]

- |                   |                  |                 |                   |                 |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 16. Mount Rebecca | 17. Rachel Creek | 18. Jonah Bay   | 19. Mount Deborah | 20. Mount Moses |
| 11. Isaac River   | 12. Miriam Vale  | 13. Mount Sarah | 14. Mount Joseph  | 15. Cain Creek  |
| 6. Abraham Point  | 7. Joshua Creek  | 8. Lake Mary    | 9. Lake Eve       | 10. Mount Jacob |
| 1. Mount Aaron    | 2. Judas Creek   | 3. Lake Adam    | 4. Abel Gorge     | 5. Noah Head    |

# Become a Supporting Member!

We realise that not everyone who wishes to support the Australian National Placenames Survey can do so by carrying out toponymic research and supplying information for our database. There *is* another way — become a supporting member of Placenames Australia! In doing so, you'll help the Survey and its volunteer researchers by providing infrastructure support. In return, you'll have the assurance that you'll be helping ensure the continued existence of this prestige national project, and we'll guarantee to keep you in touch by posting you a printed copy of this quarterly newsletter.

The Survey has no funding of its own — it relies on the generosity of its supporters, both corporate and individual. We will try to maintain our current mailing list, as long as we can; in the long term, priority will be given to Supporting Members of the association, to our volunteer research friends, to public libraries, history societies and media organisations.

Please consider carefully this invitation. If you wish to become a Member, write a cheque to Placenames Australia Inc. or arrange a bank transfer, and post this page to the Treasurer at the address below.

To ensure your continued receipt of the Newsletter, even if you are unable to support ANPS by becoming a Member, please take the time to tick the appropriate box below and return this form to us.

*Alternatively, use our website to contact us: [www.anps.org.au/contact.html](http://www.anps.org.au/contact.html)*

## Membership Details

Date: .....

Name: .....

Organisation (if applicable): .....

Address: .....

Phone: ..... Fax: ..... Email: .....

- I wish to become/remain an individual member of Placenames Australia ..... \$25
- I wish to become an organisational/corporate member of Placenames Australia ..... \$250
- I am unable to become a member at this time, but I would like to receive newsletters
  - by post OR  by email
- Please remove me from the newsletter mailing list
- Please note my change of address (new address above)

## Payment Details

- Cheques made out to Placenames Australia Inc ABN 39 652 752 594
- Direct transfer to Westpac Banking Corporation BSB 032-089, Account 275989

## Please forward this form and payment to:

Placenames Australia  
PO Box 5160  
SOUTH TURRAMURRA NSW 2074  
Email • <treasurer@anps.org.au>

## We say thank you to...

our corporate sponsor, the Geographical Names Board of NSW — and to the Secretary of the Board, Michael Van Den Bos. This year's newsletters could not have been published without the support of the GNB.

## Contributions

Contributions for Placenames Australia are welcome. Please send all contributions to the Editor, David Blair, by email:

<editor@anps.org.au>

Supporting photographs or other illustrations are greatly appreciated.

## Closing dates for submissions are:

March Issue: 15 January      September Issue: 15 July  
June Issue: 15 April      December Issue: 15 October



Land & Property Information  
Geographical Names Board