

# 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



## A puzzle solved...

### Wye Creek

We recently expressed our puzzlement about the hard-to-find Wye Creek in Tasmania. A correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* had reported crossing Wye Creek. 'A helpful explanation has been added to the sign', he said: '*Because it is smaller than a river.*'

Despite our best efforts, we could not find any trace of a Wye Creek in Tasmania; the best we could do was to locate a Wye River, on Tasmania's east coast. We're glad to say that our man in Hobart, Christopher Woods, has risen to the challenge and embarked on a field trip to solve the mystery.

## ...and a name proposed



We now know, thanks to Chris and his photographic proof (above), that a traveller's memory had betrayed him—it was the **Wye River** all the time!

### The Blinking Light

The ANPS Database has (marked as an *unofficial* name) *Item 454623* **Blinking Light**: 'a road junction, formerly marked by a centrally-located flashing amber light, at the intersection of Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road, Frenchs Forest NSW'. A recent press release tells us that 'after being approached by local residents, Roads

and Maritime Services is proposing to officially name the intersection *The Blinking Light Intersection* as a tribute to the local history of the area'.

We have often used the name as an excellent example of the way in which local history is expressed in its microtoponyms, so we heartily applaud the proposal. But it does leave us with two questions: why does RMS want to use the *Intersection* generic in the formal name; and why did we at ANPS omit the article *The* in our database entry?



*The intersection, with blinking light above, in 1960 (photo: NSW RMS)*

## From the Editor



An email to the Editor will elicit a copy of

The recent AGM of Placenames Australia (Inc.) saw two new members elected to the Management Committee. Clair Hill and Jan Tent, both of whom have been part of the Survey previously, have joined the

committee. An email to the Editor will elicit a copy of the minutes, for those who are interested.

Two recent ANPS publications are now published (see page 7) and are freely available from our website. All of our publications are now also linked live to the National Library catalogue, and may be searched via Trove.

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

## Bill Noble



initiative that brought ANPS into being in its current form.'

Bill had long managerial experience in an international context with Qantas, and when he learnt of various unsuccessful attempts to restart the Survey after it had been dormant for many years, he took up the cause in 1994. It was Bill's initiative that saw a new working group set up, various presentations made, and funding

We are sad to report the recent death of our friend and colleague Bill Noble. On hearing the news our former Director, Flavia Hodges said, 'I remember our work together with great affection, and indeed it was largely his enthusiasm and

applications submitted. The re-establishment of the project at Macquarie University in 1997 was the happy result of Bill's involvement.

Bill was the editor of the *ANPS Bulletin*, the predecessor of *Placenames Australia*, and designed the original masthead. Bill's work in toponymy was just one aspect of his wider interest in name studies (onomastics), and in 2003 he published *Names from Here and Far, the New Holland Dictionary of Names*. The dictionary records and explains thousands of personal names in Australian use and is a celebration of Australia's 'glorious mix of names from over 150 cultures'.

Bill will be fondly remembered, and we offer our condolences to his wife Gwen, and to his sons Bret, Glenn and Scott and their families.

## Notes and queries

### Upfield (VIC)

Our regular contributor Ron Wood is doubtful that **Upfield** was named to honour author Arthur Upfield. Ron notes that the original name of the railway station (North Campbellfield) was rather a mouthful, and suggests that *Upfield* was chosen to replace it, as the station was 'up a bit from Campbellfield'.

### IN or ON?

Gaye Cleeland has noted a shift in media discourse: apparently people are now said to live *in* Phillip Island rather than *on* it. She remarks, too, that she lives *at* Cape Woolamai, not *on* Cape Woolamai, and certainly

not *in* it! Why is this so? We have some thoughts on the matter, but we'd be interested to hear what readers think.

### Shibboleths

John Hammer tells us that **Moombooldool** in NSW is one of those placenames that separate the locals from the visitors. The locals know to pronounce it *Mumbledool*. So it joins **Launceston** /'lon-ses-tuhn/ and **Tumbulgum** /tum-'bul-guhm/ on the list of tell-tale pronunciations. Just don't ask us about **Jervis Bay** and **Fremantle** and **Cairns**...

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## South (or west?) to Kadavu

### Placenames of Fiji - 11

In our previous instalment of the continuing saga of island names of Fiji, I resumed our discussion of the origin of the name of the island of **Taveuni**, the third largest island in Fiji. It had previously been known as *Vuna*, but when the powerful state of Cakaudrove moved from Vanualevu across the straits to Somosomo, some 250 years ago, it changed the island's name from *Vuna* to *Taveuni*, which had been the name of the small part of the western coast the Cakaudrove people were most familiar with.

I then suggested that, like many other Fijian placenames, *Taveuni* consisted of two morphemes (meaningful units), the base being *taveu* and the suffix *-ni*, a common element in Fijian place-names meaning 'of' or 'for'. Sometimes the third element in such names has been preserved, as in **Yanucanibeka** 'small island of fruit bats', **Nanuyanikucuve** 'the small island of rats', and **Wainiura** 'river of prawns'. In many cases, however, the placename has been truncated and the third element lost. Examples include **Qarani** and **Naqarani** which literally mean, respectively, 'cave of' and 'the cave of'; but since the last morpheme has been lost, we now have no way of knowing what is or was in those caves. This, I suspect, is what happened with *Taveuni*: that it originally meant the *taveu* of something, but the last element has been lost.

So what is a *taveu*? If you look it up in any of the standard Fijian dictionaries, you won't find it. Fortunately, though, it does survive in a very small number of dialects, and means 'natural or artificial depression in a rock or tree-trunk for collecting rain-water'. Bearing in mind it originally applied not to the whole island but to a part of the western coast roughly in the middle, my suspicion is that it figuratively referred to a place where water is plentiful. Indeed, the largest river in Taveuni is found in Somosomo, in the original bailiwick of the Tui Taveuni, whereas much of the island, especially what is now Vuna in the southwest, is relatively bereft of water.

As to what the missing last element may have been, we can only guess; but my best guess is that the full form

may have been **Taveunivanua** 'source of water for the land'—but that is sheer speculation.

So we move on to the fourth largest island of Fiji—**Kadavu**, the southernmost island in the group (with the exception of some of the Lau islands on the far eastern periphery), often referred to jokingly as 'Niusiladi lailai' (small New Zealand) because of its relative proximity to New Zealand. Another common sobriquet for the island is 'Na Sauca', literally 'the south', *Sauca* being a borrowing from the English word 'south'.

The etymology of the name *Kadavu* is relatively straightforward, but raises some interesting questions about its history. Like many words that form the basis of



Coastline on Kadavu (photo: Wikimedia Commons-Jaejay77)

placenames in Fiji, it is not in use today, but its original form and meaning can be traced by linguistic methods. It is directly descended from a word *kadavu* that was used by the Lapita people, the first settlers of much of Oceania, some three thousand years ago, probably with the meaning 'raincloud'. This meaning is still found in some languages of the Admiralty Islands and New Britain (both in Papua New Guinea), and with the meaning 'raincloud' or 'rain' in many languages of Micronesia in the northern Pacific; for example *karau* in Kiribati and *ketew* in the Pohnpeian language of the Caroline Islands.

*continued next page*

## ...South (or west?) to Kadavu

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After the Lapita people had settled in Eastern Melanesia, however, the meaning of *kadavu* changed from ‘raincloud’ or ‘rain’ to ‘west wind’, presumably because the west wind was a frequent bearer of rainclouds, and this meaning is still found in languages of northern Vanuatu, such as Mota and Raga. Thus it was that when the Lapita people first settled Fiji, quite possibly from northern Vanuatu, they gave the name *Kadavu* to a small sand island situated to the west of the mainland of Vitilevu, opposite Vuda, the westernmost extremity of the island. This island’s name survived for some three thousand years until very recently, when the current owners set up a tourist resort there with the name ‘Bounty Island Resort’, believing it would attract more visitors than the name *Kadavu*. Maybe they were right.

The Lapita people then moved on to settle the rest of Fiji, retaining the word *kadavu* and its meaning for at least some time. On the north coast of Vanualevu there is an old village site called Kadavu, situated to the west of Vunirara, the former chiefly village of Macuata.

After all of Fiji had been settled, the Lapita people moved fairly swiftly on eastwards to be the first occupants of the western Polynesian islands of Tonga, Futuna, ‘Uvea and Samoa; and from Samoa, at least a thousand years later, a group moved northwards to settle the chain of atolls aptly called **Tokelau**, which means ‘north wind’ or ‘north’ in Polynesian. The most westerly of the three atolls of Tokelau they christened, equally aptly, **Atafu**, the Polynesian version of *Kadavu*, so meaning ‘west wind’ or simply ‘west’.

So far so good. It seems that, just as the Lapita settlers of the Pacific used other wind direction terms to name islands—*Tonga* meaning ‘south’, *Viti/Fiji* and *Tahiti* meaning ‘east’, *Tokelau* meaning ‘north’—so they also used *Kadavu*, meaning ‘west wind’ or ‘west’, to name islands or localities situated in the west. The only problem is that Kadavu is situated not to the west of the nearest landmass, Vitilevu, but to the south!

So if, as seems reasonable to assume, Kadavu was first settled by people from Vitilevu, one might expect it to be named after a word meaning ‘south’, not after a word meaning ‘west’. There is indeed a part of Kadavu, approximately half-way along the northern coast, which is named *Naceva*, meaning ‘the south’, and it is the

nearest land directly south of Vitilevu, but the name does not apply to the whole island.

It is not impossible that *kadavu* changed its meaning from ‘west’ to ‘south’, but this would be a very *ad hoc* solution. I believe that solving this puzzle requires us to turn to a feature of Pacific cultures which has yielded a number of placenames and can help us understand settlement patterns: the jumping-off places of spirits of the dead. This, however, will have to be the topic of our next instalment on Fiji placenames.

**Paul Geraghty**

*University of the South Pacific*

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### Eggs and Bacon Bay

We are indebted to ABC News for informing us of a recent foray into cultural toponymy by the animal rights group PETA.

The group has taken issue with the name of southern Tasmania’s **Eggs and Bacon Bay** and is lobbying for it to be changed to a vegan alternative. They believe that *Apple and Cherry Bay* would be ‘a better, kinder, compassionate and healthy name... and would remind people to stay away from fat-laden and high cholesterol foods and focus on eating the fresh plant produce the valley has to offer.’

Local response has not been particularly sympathetic, however. It’s been pointed out that the toponym has nothing to do with the apocryphal story that Lady Jane Franklin, wife of the 19th century governor John Franklin, picnicked on bacon and eggs there. The bay was, in fact,



named after the wildflower which is commonly called ‘Eggs and Bacon’ (family Fabaceae) and which carpets its shores in November and December.

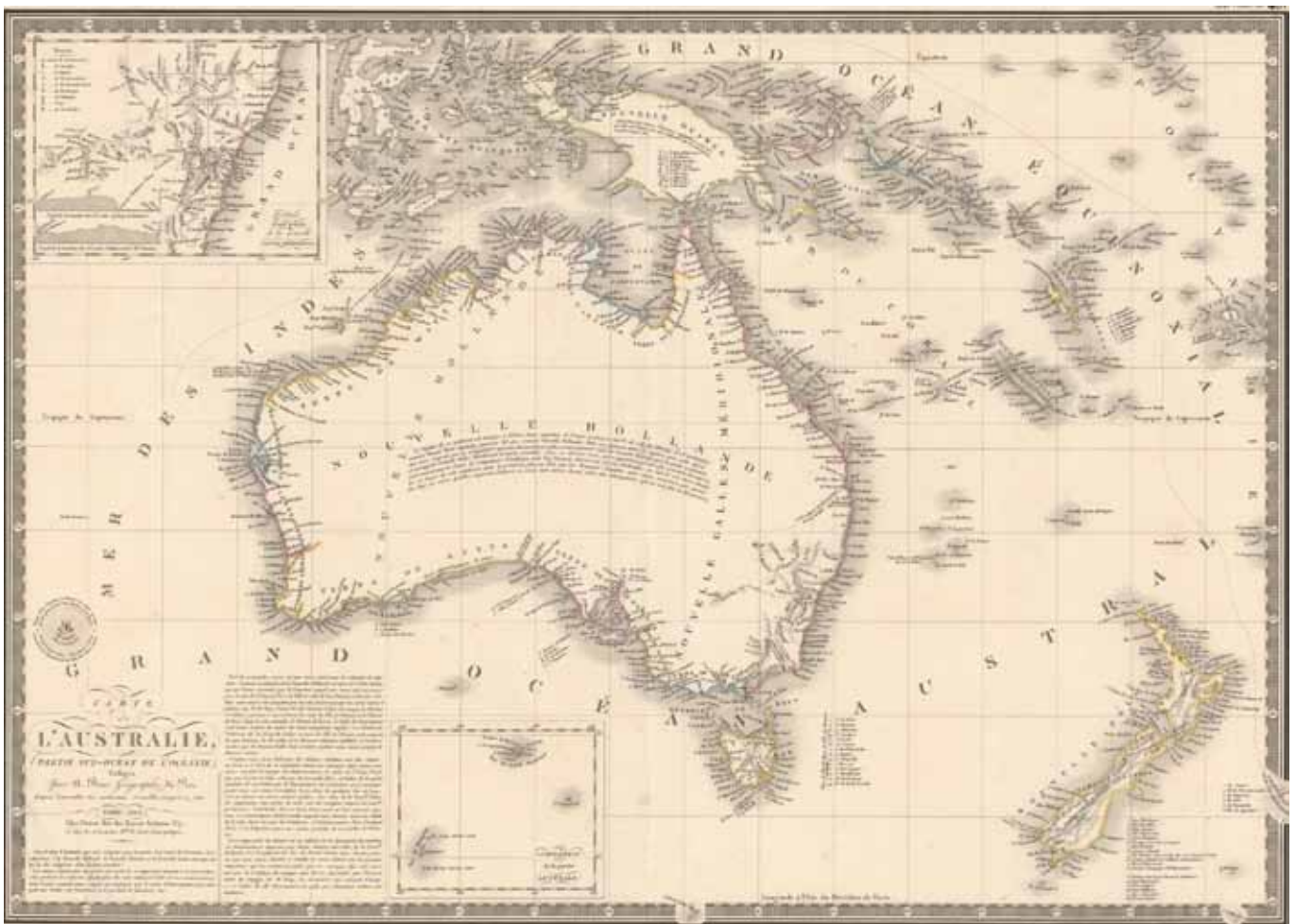
The group has, ominously, not ruled out requesting other changes around the country where there are ‘inappropriately named areas’.

# Early names of Australia's coastal regions

## Part 1

In 2010 we published two articles in *Placenames Australia* on two unusual names for the Australian continent—*Notasia* and *Ulimaroa*—(Geraghty & Tent, 2010; Tent, 2010). Before the whole continent had been properly charted, a number of names on early maps designated large swathes of coastal territory. I am not talking about the hundreds of names bestowed on particular natural features such as rivers, capes, mountains, bays and islands, but names, rather, that encompass whole, mainly coastal, regions. These names, like the individual feature names, were bestowed by Dutch, French and English explorers or cartographers.

Perhaps the best map depicting such coastal region names is the *Carte de l'Australie (partie sud-ouest de l'Océanie)* of Hubert Brué (1826) (Figure 1), which shows Dutch, French and English regional names. The coastline of each named region is given its own colour to show the extent of each.<sup>1</sup>



*Figure 1: Section of the Hubert Brué (1826) map, Carte de l'Australie (partie sud-ouest de l'Océanie) (MAP T 259) Courtesy of the National Library of Australia*

In this survey I catalogue the early coastal region names of Australia and provide a brief description and history of each. Each name will be listed chronologically under the headings 'DUTCH', 'FRENCH' and 'ENGLISH' NAMES. All the names, bar two, are no longer extant. In this issue we just look at the names bestowed by the Dutch. In a subsequent issue of *Placenames Australia* we'll look at the French and English contributions to coastal region names.

*continued next page*

# Early names of Australia's coastal regions...

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## Dutch names<sup>2</sup>

It was the Dutch who first bestowed coastal region names on their charts of the South Land. These extended (in an anticlockwise direction) from Cape York, through the Gulf of Carpentaria, around the Top End, down the coast of Western Australia, then east across much of the Great Australian Bight and down to the south and east coast of Tasmania.

### *ʼt Land van d' Eendracht / Eendrachtslandt / Eendrachts Landt*

This refers to the Western Australian coastal stretch from approximately the Ashburton River to Albany (about 1900 km) charted by Dirk Hartog in 1616. Hartog, on his way from the Cape of Good Hope to Batavia, unexpectedly came upon the west coast and provided us with its earliest known record of exploration. *Eendrachtsland* was in use in VOC documents as early as 1619. The name derives from Hartog's ship the *Eendracht* ('Concord').

### *I. d' Edels Landt / Dedels Land / Edelsland*

This name identified the coastal region adjacent the Houtman Abrolhos. It was charted in 1619 when the two VOC ships *Dordrecht* and *Amsterdam* under command of Frederik De Houtman, with supercargo Jacob Dedel, came across the west coast on their voyage from the Netherlands to the East Indies.

### *ʼt Landt van de Leeuwin / Leeuwins Land*

The VOC ship *Leeuwin* ('Lioness') explored part of the south-west coast of Western Australia in 1622, on its way to Batavia. It was almost shipwrecked at what is now known as **Cape Leeuwin**. *Leeuwins Land* referred to the south-west corner of the continent. The *Leeuwin*'s log has never been recovered, so unfortunately very little is known about the voyage, including the name of its captain.

### *Carpentaria*

This was the name given to the western coastline of Cape York peninsula (that is, the east coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria), during the voyage of discovery in 1623 by Jan Carstenszoon, captain of the *Arnhem*, and William Joosten van Coolsteerdt (or, Colster), captain of the *Pera*. *Carpentaria* was named in honour of Pieter de Carpentier, the then Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies.

### *Arnhem Land*

The western coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria (the east coast of the Top End) was given this name by captain Jan Carstenszoon. The region is named after his ship the *Arnhem*, which itself was named after the Dutch city of Arnhem.

### *Speults Lant / Van Speults Land*

Herman van Speult was the Governor of Amboyna (Ambon) from 1618 until 1625. He commissioned the exploration voyage of the *Arnhem* and *Pera*. *Van Speults Land*, purported to refer to either part of **Arnhem Land** or to **Groote Eylandt**, was named by Carstenszoon in 1623.

### *G.F. de Witts landt / Frederick de Wittsland / F De Witts Land / De Witts Land / Dewittsland*

This was the name for the stretch of coastline east of the Montebello Islands. It was named after the commander of the VOC ship *Vianen*, Gerrit Frederikszoen de Witt, who explored that part of the WA coast in 1628. The *Vianen* ran aground somewhere near what is now Port Hedland. The ship was freed by offloading cargo. De Witt then followed the coast southwards as far as the Montebello Islands, Barrow Island and the coastal reefs to the south.

### *ʼt Landt van P. Nuyts / Nuytsland*

In 1627 François Thijssen and Pieter Nuyts, Councillor of the Dutch East Indies, aboard the *Gulden Zeepaerd* ('Golden Seahorse'), charted 1800 km of the South Land's southern coastline between Cape Leeuwin and the Nuyts Archipelago. They named the stretch of coastline *Pieter Nuyt's Land*. Until then, no-one had any knowledge of the south coast.

### *Van Diemens Land / Van Diemensland*

This *Van Diemens Land*, not to be confused with the *Van Diemens Land* we now know as *Tasmania*, refers to the stretch of coastline on the west coast of the Top End, and was named after Anthoonij (or, Anthonio) van Diemen, the then Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. The name was bestowed in 1636 by the expedition of Gerrit Thomaszoon Pool and Pieter Pieterszoon on the yachts *Cleyen Amsterdam* ('Little Amsterdam') and *Wesel*.

### *Marias Landt / Marialand*

This territory lay immediately east of Van Diemensland and west of Arnhemland. It was named during the

## ...Part 1 - Dutch names

Pool/Pieterszoon expedition of 1636, after the wife of Anthoonij van Diemen. (**Maria Island** in Tasmania is also named after her.)

### *Anthoonij van Diemenslandt / Van Diemens Land*

Abel Tasman and Franchoijs Visscher charted the south and east coasts of Tasmania in 1642. Tasman named the island in honour of Anthoonij van Diemen, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies who had sent Tasman on this voyage of discovery. It was often erroneously referred to as *Van Demon's Land*. The name *Van Diemen's Land* persisted until 1856 when it was changed to **Tasmania**.

### *Nieuw Holland / Nova Hollandia / New Holland*

The original European name for the whole 'South Land' was first applied in 1644 by Abel Tasman on his second voyage of discovery. He explored and charted the northern and western coast of Australia from Cape York to Point Cloates (near Ningaloo). He bestowed the name on the western part of the continent. After 1788, the eastern half of the continent (claimed by Britain) was dubbed **New South Wales**, leaving the western half as

*New Holland*, which continued to be used semi-officially, and in popular usage, as the name for the whole continent until at least the mid-1850s.

**Jan Tent**

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The maps cited in this article are not the only maps that exist with the coastal region names discussed. They are simply representative examples of maps that portray the coastal region names.
- <sup>2</sup> Because Dutch spelling in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had not been standardised, most names appear on maps in different forms or spellings.

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## New from ANPS



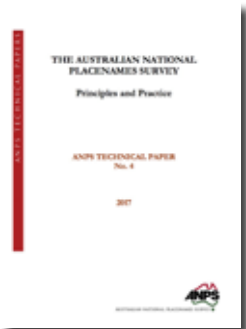
### ANPS Data Report No. 5

#### *Ocean Beach Names: Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong*

by David Blair

Now available from our website:

[www.anps.org.au/publications5.html](http://www.anps.org.au/publications5.html)



### ANPS Technical Report No. 4

#### *The Australian National Placenames Survey: Principles and Practice*

by David Blair

Now available from our website:

[www.anps.org.au/publications3.html](http://www.anps.org.au/publications3.html)

# Toponymy 101

In some of the preceding articles in this *Toponymy 101* series I have written on placenames and politics, government, geography and history, and attempted to show the importance of placenames in these spheres. In this article we continue the theme by discussing the impact placenames have on other areas of our lives, and show how they help define our world.

Placenames have been the source for names of all sorts of manufactured goods, clothing, textiles, foods and beverages (especially wines and cheeses), chemical elements, sports, diseases, flora and fauna.<sup>1</sup> Some examples include:

- bikini ← Bikini Atoll (Marshall Islands)
- jeans ← Genoa (Italy)
- jodhpurs ← Jodhpur (India)
- axminster (carpet) ← Axminster (UK)
- calico ← Kozhikode (Kerala / Calicut, India)
- damask ← Damascus (Syria)
- denim ← Nimes (France)
- tweed ← Tweed River (UK)
- worsted ← Worstead (UK)
- mayonnaise ← Mahón (Menorca, Spain)
- wensleydale ← Wensleydale (UK)
- gouda ← Gouda (Netherlands)
- angostura bitters ← Angostura (Venezuela)
- champagne ← Champagne (France)
- pilsner ← Plzeň (Bohemia, Czech Republic)
- cognac ← Cognac (France)
- copper ← Latin *cyprium* ‘metal of Cyprus’, later shortened to *cuprum*
- erbium ← Ytterby (Sweden)
- rugby (football) ← Rugby (UK)

Some linguists refer to these as ‘deonyms’, that is, common nouns derived from proper names.

Australian placenames do not feature so prominently in this domain, perhaps because our recorded placenames are relatively recent. However, we do have a number of toponyms that feature in the names of some very nasty diseases and medical conditions. There are numerous Australian toponymous viruses; perhaps this is the most productive area of Australian toponymic neologisms (see Appuhamy, Tent & Mackenzie, 2010). Here is a sample:

- Hendra virus ← suburb of Brisbane
- Ross River fever ← Ross River (Townsville)
- Bairnsdale ulcer ← Bairnsdale (Victoria)

# E: How placenames...

- Murray Valley encephalitis
- Barmah Forest virus ← Northern Victoria
- Flinders Island spotted fever
- Queensland tick typhus
- Mossman fever ← Mossman (Queensland)
- Trubanaman virus ← original name of Mitchell River Mission
- Edge Hill & Stratford viruses ← suburbs of Cairns
- Bunjip Creek virus ← Victoria
- Warrego virus ← Warrego River (Queensland)
- Gan Gan virus ← Gan Gan Hill (Nelson Bay)

Car manufacturers often name models after places, although there aren't many examples of these in Australia. Leyland Australia provided two: the Austin X6 **Kimberley** and **Tasman**. As a Leyland fan website says, the names were ‘presumably chosen to emphasise their Australian origin—the Kimberley Mountain range runs across the center of the country through Alice Springs, and the Tasman Sea separates Australia and New Zealand’.<sup>2</sup> The Holden **Monaro** is another (← Monaro region, NSW). Holden's **Kingswood** and **Belmont** are often assumed to be named after Australian toponyms, but they aren't. (Chevrolet station wagons in the US came out with the Kingswood name in 1959, long before it was used by Holden.) The Toyota **Tarago** doesn't derive its name from an Australian place either. The original Toyota presskit declared: ‘The word Tarago is derived from an Australian Aboriginal word for “my country” or “my house” [...] Although Tarago the vehicle is not named after the town and the pronunciations differ, they are equally accommodating to the needs of Australians.’<sup>3</sup>

However, one of the most productive areas where Australian placenames are used is in food and beverages names:

- Bega cheese
- Gippsland blue
- Jindi brie ← Jindivick
- Milawa blue
- Melbourne Bitter
- Bondi Blond
- NT Draught (← Northern Territory) which famously came in the *Darwin stubby*

Excluding the use of the term *Australian*, which is commonly used as a qualifier, our flora and fauna don't often bear the name of a place. Here are some exceptions, though:



# ...help define our world

Moreton Bay fig *Ficus macrophylla*  
Port Jackson fig *Ficus rubiginosa*  
Blue Mountain ash *Eucalyptus oreades*  
Phillip Island hibiscus *Hibiscus insularis*  
New England blackbutt *Eucalyptus andrewsii* ssp.  
*andrewsii*

Balmain bug *Ibacus* spp. *Scyllaridae*  
Moreton Bay bug *Thenus* spp. *Scyllaridae*  
Sydney rock oyster *Saccostrea glomerata*  
Port Jackson shark *Heterodontus portusjacksoni*  
Murray cod *Maccullochella peelii*  
Norfolk Island gerygone *Gerygone modesta*  
And the most obscure one of all—  
rosella *Platycercus* spp. ← ‘Rosehiller’  
← Rosehill



Another way placenames are used deonymically is in the phenomenon linguists often refer to as ‘metonymy’. This is the metaphorical use of a placename to refer to a thing or concept. For instance, we often hear expressions such as *Washington*, *Canberra*, *Beijing*, and *Moscow* (i.e. capital cities) being used

metonymously to refer to the governments, government agencies and the like. Some other examples include:<sup>4</sup>

the Kremlin ‘the Russian government’  
the Vatican ‘the Holy See; the Roman Catholic Church’  
the Pentagon ‘US Defense Department’  
Macquarie Street ‘the NSW Government’  
Brussels ‘EU Headquarters’

Then there are placenames that have become synonymous with industries, institutions, treaties, disasters, and other archtypal events:

Hollywood ‘the US Film industry’  
Wall Street ‘the US financial and corporate sector’  
Fleet Street ‘the British national press’  
Kyoto ‘international climate change treaty/protocol’  
Bhopal ‘Union Carbide gas leak disaster, India’  
Chernobyl ‘nuclear power plant disaster, Ukraine’

Fukushima ‘nuclear power plant disaster and tsunami’  
Waterloo ‘battle at which Napoleon was defeated’<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, toponyms are not just useful as points on maps or as items on road signs—we put them to good use to name all sorts of things.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See Wikipedia’s ‘List of words derived from toponyms’ for an extended list of examples: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_words\\_derived\\_from\\_toponyms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_words_derived_from_toponyms)>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Austin X6 Kimberley and Tasman’ <<http://www.elevenhundred.com/kimberley/index.htm>>

<sup>3</sup> ‘2007 Tarago V6 Press Kit Tarago - The Origin of the Name’. [https://www.pressroom.com.au/press\\_kit\\_detail.asp?kitID=213&clientID=2&navSectionID=6#2101](https://www.pressroom.com.au/press_kit_detail.asp?kitID=213&clientID=2&navSectionID=6#2101). See our previous discussion of the Monaro and the Tarago in *Placenames Australia*, September 2013, p.10. The suggestion that *tarago* is an Aboriginal word for ‘country’ comes from A.W. Reed’s collection of NSW Aboriginal words; the origin is unconfirmed, and Reed’s work is not regarded as a reliable source.

<sup>4</sup> For more, see Wikipedia’s ‘List of metonyms’ <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_metonyms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_metonyms)>

<sup>5</sup> This metonym, perhaps more than any other, has etched itself into popular culture. The phrase ‘to meet one’s Waterloo’ is a very common way of signifying a great test with a final and decisive outcome—generally one resulting in failure and showing that no one is invincible.

## References

Appuhamy, Ranil D., Jan Tent & John S. Mackenzie (2010). ‘Toponymous diseases of Australia’, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 193: 642–646.

Jan Tent

### To Kosciusko

Good Kosciusko, thy great name alone  
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing  
Of the wide spheres — an everlasting tone.  
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,  
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,  
Are changed to harmonies, for ever stealing  
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.  
It tells me too, that on a happy day,  
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,  
Thy name with Alfred’s, and the great of yore  
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth  
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away  
To where the great God lives for evermore.

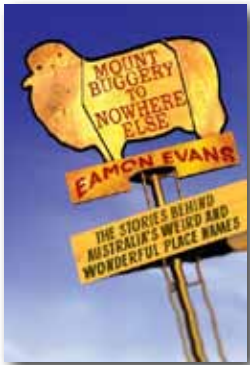
John Keats

*An ode to the explorer rather than to his eponymous mount, Kosciuszko—nevertheless we are happy to raise the literary tone by its inclusion*

# I'm bugged if I know where I am

*Mount Buggery to Nowhere Else: The stories behind Australia's weird and wonderful place names* — by Eamon Evans (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2016). Reviewed by **Joshua Nash**

An earlier form of this condensed review appeared in *The Conversation*, <http://theconversation.com>



Why do we know so little about how placenames actually work? Why for instance can we say *The Ukraine* and *The Sudan* but not *The India* or *The Egypt*? Why are placenames less prone to change than other aspects of language, such as accents? And regardless of how well-furnished a map or smartphone may be with placenames and directions, how do we still manage to get lost? Many of

Eamon Evans's stories go some way to responding to some of these inadequacies and foibles, with much humour.

The book begins with a reasonable and justified diss of Lucky Starr and his 1962 claim 'I've been everywhere, man.' Evans doubts Lucky's claim—fair enough, at least 94 are listed—and estimates this large country of ours has around four million placenames. Visiting these would take yonks, around half a lifetime says Evans, and would involve using lots of petrol, shoes, and time travelling beyond the Black Stump and back o' Bourke. His observations and offbeat remarks, the author claims, save us from doing all this legwork and allow us to sit back and enjoy the often-bumpy yet comical toponymic ride.

As Evans tells us about the histories and etymologies of places like *Lake Alexandrina* in South Australia, the colonial makeup of our previously toponymically 'Terra Annulled' joint is made real: '...named after Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandrina of Kent, the then heir to the British throne. A nice gesture, but perhaps a wasted one, as the princess much preferred her middle name. We now call her Queen Victoria' (p. 226). He provides quirky introductions to each of the nine chapters—one for Australia and one each for every State and Territory—along with sprinklings of entertaining drawings, and more toponymic toilet humour than one could poke a dirty toilet brush at in an outback dunny. The knob gets quite a mention—a prominent rounded hill, mountain, or elevation on a ridge, but also an allusion to the vulgar slang meaning a man's penis—with *Chinamans Knob*, *Governors Knob*, *Iron Knob*, *Nimbin's Blue Knob*, *Spanker Knob*, *Yorkeys Knob*..., and I think you get the picture. We're told about *Mount Little Dick* in Victoria, which Evans hopes is named after a small man named Richard who used to live there and nothing

else, *Lake Fanny* near *Mossy Nipple Bend* in Tasmania, and a few perky hills, also in Tasmania, called *The Nipples*.

The entry for *Verdun* (p. 240) gives excellent information about the cleansing-cum-sanitisation of German placenames in South Australia during the Great War. *Friedrichstadt* became *Tangari*, *Neudorf* became *Mamburdi*, and *Hahndorf* became *Ambleside* to become *Hahndorf* again in 1935. 'About the only German place name that wasn't changed,' Evans tells us, 'was Adelaide—a city named after a German princess' (p. 241).

One can always quibble about what was not given. Regarding the contemporary issue of dual naming, it was a shame not to have seen a little more beyond the *Uluru-Ayers Rock* example. Dual placenaming is a weighty and contentious affair in modern Australian politics and the social cartography of this once unnamed land is dependent on best representing all levels of placenaming, which have taken place here: Indigenous, British, German, Pacific, and others. Perhaps this is something for the second edition of Evans's book if he's not too bugged.

And then, of course, there's Norfolk Island, the most easterly part of geographical and political Australia. Because English is only a *de facto* official language on mainland Australia, Norfolk Island is actually the only region of Australia to have English as the official language. Norfolk, the Norfolk Island language, is co-official with English and is used in placenaming. So where are the Norfolk Island placenames? And those of Lord Howe, Christmas Island, and other Australian island territories. Again, something for the second edition.

I am sure there are more than a handful of factual errors in this 280-page book, but I don't see it as my task to identify or locate any of these. Google Maps is often horribly wrong, and I know I've been wrong many times in my toponymic work; so I assume Evans is mistaken more than once. But who cares? Placenames are fun and their study should be the same. What Evans offers is an amusing take on a potentially very dry topic. If humour can be used to good effect and if it gets people thinking about these important matters from this humorous perspective, then this is a noble achievement.

**Joshua Nash**

University of New England

# Where are we?



Sign A



Sign B

As you can tell from the old-style Qantas logo, *Sign A* is an old photo (1959) of a signpost somewhere outside of the Australian continent. *Sign B* is more recent. Where are they? (*Answers below*)

## Placenames Puzzle Number 61

### Foreign language toponyms

*In this puzzle we turn the tables. For a change, we provide you with the placenames, and you will have to provide the language from which it is derived. For example: (NT) Arnhem Land < Dutch. Some may be quite transparent, while others more opaque. Some names may have been anglicised over time or calqued (i.e. translated literally), but all are introduced placenames.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (VIC) Howqua</li> <li>2. (NSW) Waitara</li> <li>3. (NSW) Lakemba (<i>somewhat anglicised</i>)</li> <li>4. (TAS) Pedra Branca</li> <li>5. (WA) Houtman Abrolhos</li> <li>6. (QLD) Coen</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. (SA) Rosedale (<i>calqued</i>)</li> <li>8. (TAS) Frederick Hendricks Bay</li> <li>9. (WA) Esperance</li> <li>10. (WA) Hamelin Island</li> <li>11. (WA) Leeman</li> <li>12. (QLD) Ulimaroa</li> <li>13. (WA) Sable Island</li> <li>14. (SA) Lobethal (<i>somewhat anglicised</i>)</li> <li>15. (TAS) Storm Bay</li> <li>16. (NSW) Malua Bay</li> <li>17. (WA) Adele Island</li> <li>18. (NT) Wessel Islands</li> <li>19. (SA) St Peter Island &amp; St Francis Island (<i>somewhat anglicised</i>)</li> <li>20. (SA) Stonefield</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

[Compiled by: **Jan Tent**]

- A: Canton Island; B: Pitcairn Island  
 20. German (orig. *Steinfeld*)  
 19. Dutch  
 18. Dutch  
 17. French  
 16. Probably Samoan  
 15. Dutch

14. German  
 13. French  
 12. Maori (orig. *ko Rimaroa*)  
 11. Dutch  
 10. French  
 9. French  
 8. Dutch  
 7. German (orig. *Rosenbath*)  
 6. Dutch  
 5. Dutch and Portuguese  
 4. Portuguese  
 3. Fijian  
 2. Maori  
 1. Chinese

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