

## THE POWER OF ‘VRIL’

In May last year, one of our readers, Tom Stevens, sent me an email enquiring about the origin of the placename [Vrilya Point](#).<sup>1</sup> This is a small remote rocky outcrop that juts into the Gulf of Carpentaria on the north-west coast of the tip of Cape York Peninsula. It lies some 27 kms south of Crab Island (see the March 2005 Newsletter) and 120 kms north of the Pennefather River (see the September 2005 Newsletter). The traditional owners of the area are the Angkamuthi (or Ankamuti) people. The Point is now a popular camping and fishing spot. The rusting hulk of the gas lightship CLS2 *Carpentaria* lies on a beach just north of the Point. In the monsoon season early in the 1980s the lightship drifted from its position on Merkara Shoal and ran aground on the beach. Its sister ship CLS4 *Carpentaria* is on display at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney.<sup>2</sup>

Tom had read on page 98 of *Cape York an Adventurer's Guide*<sup>3</sup> that: "Vrilya Point was named by those early Dutch navigators, is a rocky cliff-faced headland on the west coast of Cape York, about 50 kms south of the Jardine River." The website of the Cape York Development Association<sup>4</sup> also claims it was named by the Dutch: "The Dutch saw it [the red colour of the cliffs] and even named [Vrilya Point](#), to commemorate its colour." These contentions are problematic. Firstly, there is no cartographic or written record of the Dutch attributing any such a name to any topographic feature in the region. Secondly, although Dutch words can begin with *vr-* (e.g. *viend* 'friend'), there is no word in Dutch that resembles *vrilya* in form or pronunciation.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, the Dutch for 'red' is *rood*, and for 'vermillion', *vermiljoen* (with the variations *vermillioen* and *vermeilloen*)<sup>6</sup> – all quite dissimilar to *vrilya*. Dutch is not the origin of this name.

So, could it derive from an Australian Indigenous language? There are several considerations here. The first, concerns the sound pattern of the word *vrilya*. It is well-known that most Indigenous languages do not have fricative sounds (e.g. *f*, *v*, *s*, *z*)<sup>7</sup>, and although the Angkamuthi do have the

fricative [ $\beta$ ] (quite similar to English *v*), they don't allow [ $\beta$  + *r*].<sup>8</sup> The Brisbane-based historian, Geoff Wharton, suggests there may be a possibility that the word is an import from a neighbouring language, like Tjungundji (a Mapoon language), which does allow such consonant combinations. It so happens that the Tjungundji word for the Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*) is *vrilingathi*, pronounced "frill-ing-nathy" or "prill-ing-nathy". Geoff reports that that early missionaries at Mapoon frequently travelled with their Aboriginal crews

up and down the coastline between Mapoon and Thursday Island<sup>9</sup>, and proposes that it may be possible the Point was named by them using an abbreviated form of *vrilingathi*. If we were to allow that possibility of an Indigenous source, a second (and more difficult) issue would need to be resolved: the only suggested origin, *vrilingathi*, seems too remote in both form and association. The "abbreviated" form with its *-ya* ending is too distinct from *vrilingathi*. English speakers would typically use a zero or *-y* ending, giving us, for example, *frill* or *frilly*. Secondly, the only

documented pronunciations of *vrilingathi* have initial *f* or *p*, rather than the *v* in its written form. Finally, we have no documented evidence of Palm Cockatoos being associated with [Vrilya Point](#). Without this evidence, the case is unconvincing.

All in all then, an Indigenous origin for *vrilya* also appears to be unlikely. So, if Dutch or Aboriginal origins can't be sustained, what other possibility might there be? Before I attempt to answer that question, a little background about the Point is needed.

Graham Taylor, of the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water, informs me that the Department has no record on the origin of the name. However, he notes that Vrilya is an entry in a list of Pastoral Holdings where it is shown as a Parish and also a Point.<sup>10</sup> Geoff Wharton was kind enough to unearth two early maps at the Queensland State Archives in a bid to discover when [Vrilya Point](#) was named.

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*Vrilya Point*

## Can You Help?

Our correspondent Joy Little asks if anyone has heard of a place called Morris's Turnback. Joy's great-grandmother, Melinda Morris, was an intrepid traveller in the early years of the 19th century. She made the journey from Queensland to WA by horse-drawn dray, accompanied by Aboriginal guides. A newspaper report from 1900 recounts how, at her first attempt, she had to turn back because of adverse weather. "Morris's Turnback is still named to this day," says the article.

Although Melinda Morris finally made it to WA (where she married Henry Hardinge and settled at Meekatharra, on a property called Yarra Bubba), we don't know whether Morris's Turnback was in Queensland, NSW or WA. Email [editor@anps.org.au](mailto:editor@anps.org.au) if you have any suggestions.

## Obituary

Colleagues in England have told us of the death in April this year, aged 84, of Margaret Gelling. Dr Gelling was for more than 50 years one of Britain's leading experts in the study of placenames; she was also highly successful in making that scholarship available to a very wide lay readership. Dr Gelling's most recent project was the multi-volume work *Place Names of Shropshire*; she was hard at work on volume 7 when her final illness overtook her. Placenames Australia is particularly indebted to Dr Gelling, since it was her recommendation that led our Vice-President, Joyce Miles, to make contact with Flavia Hodges and ANPS on Joyce's arrival in Australia.

## Apology

David Blair humbly apologises for forgetting to write his name at the top of the paper - twice! Our main article in the June 2009 issue on Moreton Bay was all his own work, as was the review of Ian Murray's book on Western Australian coastal names. David promises not to forget in future.



## AGM Notice

The **Annual General Meeting** of Placenames Australia will be held at 5:30 pm on Thursday 8 October, at Land Victoria, Level 16, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne. Nominations for membership of the association's executive committee, with the name of the proposer and seconder, can be submitted to the secretary of the association, Jan Tent, at [director@anps.org.au](mailto:director@anps.org.au)

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## Placenames of Kangaroo Island

Joshua Nash, a Research Friend of ANPS, gave a presentation on Kangaroo Island placenames at this year's Australian Linguistic Society conference, and spoke to Lingua Franca listeners on ABC Radio National on 4th July. A transcript of his talk can be found on the ABC's Lingua Franca website, and also on our ANPS website: follow the link at <http://www.anps.org.au/about.html>. We hope to have more about Josh and Kangaroo Island in the next issue!

## 2009 Donations

A number of our readers, since last year, have donated their \$25 to support the Survey and become Members of Placenames Australia for the next financial year. We thank them for their support, and encourage all our readers to help in this way. As you know, this newsletter is free to all who want to receive it - and we'll keep it that way as long as we can. But we are grateful to those who are able to support our work (and the distribution of this newsletter) by sending their donations. ***If you can help in this way, see our back page!***

## ANPS Media Events

In the first half of this year, ANPS staff have handled the usual media calls. In April, David Blair talked to Joseph Thomsen on ABC Goulburn Murray, following our article on Howqua. In June, listeners to ABC Riverina heard David discussing placenames such as Griffith and Coleambally with presenter Chris Coleman. Reporter Gemma Seymour from the *Penrith Sun* (NSW) rang David to learn what ANPS was doing, and to talk about placenames from the Penrith area. At the end of June, Jan Tent talked to Melbourne listeners of ABC 774 Breakfast on two consecutive mornings—the topic for the morning was Melbourne's suburb names.

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The oldest map, dated 1882, includes an inset map of Cape York Peninsula, but the Point is not recorded on that edition.<sup>11</sup> Geoff reports that although the date of publication is not absolutely certain, the map was originally contained in a Queensland Colonial Secretary's correspondence file In Letter 8345/84 (1884). The second map, a Queensland 16 Mile Series map, sheet 7, published 1894, does show [Vrilya Point](#).<sup>12</sup> So, it appears the Point was named prior to that map's publication. This is corroborated by a number of maps published prior to 1894, which were found by Graham, and they also show [Vrilya Pt](#). Three of these are dated 1892. The first is a map of Queensland 'Illustrating the Stock Routes and Main Roads, Railway Lines, Principal Railway Stations, Stock Trucking Yards and Government Artesian Bores & Tanks'.<sup>13</sup> The second, a map of Torres Strait and Islands, shows [Vrilya Pt](#) and its associated cliffs.<sup>14</sup> The third, also a map of Torres Strait and Islands, is almost identical but shows [Vrilya Pt](#) as well as [Vrilya](#) (Parish).<sup>15</sup> The fourth map, the 4 mile map 21A, dated 1928, shows [Vrilya Pt](#) and [Vrilya](#) (Parish).<sup>16</sup> However, the position of [Vrilya](#) (Parish) shown on this map is south of that shown on the previous map. There is no known explanation for this.

The Queensland geologist C.F.V. Jackson visited [Vrilya Point](#) in the late 19th century and collected geological specimens there, and refers to it on page 7 in his report. The report also includes a map of the west coast of Cape York and shows [Vrilya Point](#). Jackson describes the Point as "the only prominent feature between Port Musgrave and the north-west corner of the peninsula", with its cliffs rising nearly 80 feet above sea level and "they present a vertical escarpment for the upper 15 or 20 feet, and slope then more gently to the base, this lower portion being composed of very coarse and crumbling brown sandstone. The upper portion has been laid down in a much finer-grained and more argillaceous form which is very ferruginous, and for a thickness of 15 or 20 feet below the top of the cliff, has formed into a deposit of somewhat clayey pisolitic ironstone or iron ore."<sup>17</sup> The latter characteristic accounts for the redness of the cliffs noted by Cape York Development Association on their website.

Geoff Wharton also reports that during the World War II, a Volunteer Defence Corps coast-watching station was based at [Vrilya Point](#).<sup>18</sup> The Point remained within Vacant Crown Land until 1950, when it was incorporated into the Mapoon Aboriginal Reserve.<sup>19</sup> In 1958, that part of the Mapoon Aboriginal Reserve was cancelled and [Vrilya Point](#) was included in the Special Bauxite Mining Lease No.1 (now named ML 7024). It is still within Rio Tinto Alcan's mining lease ML 7024.<sup>20</sup>

Alright then, so what is the origin and meaning of *vrilya*? A Google search will immediately yield more than 8,000 hits for the word. Apart from internet sites referring to our place of interest, there are numerous sites that refer to the 'Vrilya' or 'Vrilya', a fictional subterranean humanoid race in Baron Edward George Bulwer-Lytton's (1803-1873) novel *The Coming Race* published in 1870.<sup>21</sup> Bulwer-Lytton was involved in politics and was Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1858-59. His most popular book was *The Last Days of Pompeii*. However, the rather pedestrian *The Coming*

*Race* was also very popular at the time, and is often cited as the first example of the science fiction genre. Bulwer-Lytton's Vrilya had mental control over, and derived devastating powers from, a mysterious energy force named 'Vrilya'. This force could be used as an agent of destruction or healing. For a time in the late-19th century, the word 'Vrilya' came to be associated with life-giving elixirs. Indeed, the thick, salty beef extract, *Bovril* (often used to make a hot drink), invented by J. Lawson Johnston in 1889, derives its name from combining Latin *bos* (*bovis*) 'ox', and 'Vrilya'. Wine tasters use the expression 'bovril nose' as part of their vocabulary. 'Vrilya' even rates an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

As an interesting and rather bizarre aside, there are also claims that a secret Vrilya Society existed in Germany between 1920 and the end of World War II. In 1935, German rocket engineer and science fiction author Willy Ley fled to the United States. He published an article in 1937 in which he claims a group called *Wahrheitsgesellschaft* (Society for Truth) was established to look for the existence of 'Vrilya' in order to, among

other things, build a perpetual motion machine. Ley's article encouraged other "researchers" to make claims that a real Vrilya Society existed in Germany, and that Hitler, Rosenberg, Himmler, and Göring were among its members. There have even been claims that the Vrilya Society was the precursor to the Nazi Party. There is no concrete or credible evidence to support any of these claims.

I found some 360,000 websites on 'Vrilya' alone! Its Wikipedia entry suggests it originates from the Sumerian *Vri-Il* 'like god'.<sup>22</sup> However, Sumerian does not

permit consonant clusters within syllables, so no word or word element like *Vri-* is possible. The word for 'like' (i.e. 'similar to') in Sumerian is *ur*, and that for 'god' is *ilu*.<sup>23</sup> Sumerian is, therefore, not the source of the term. 'Vrilya' is most likely a nonce word coined by Bulwer-Lytton.

The most logical source for [Vrilya Point](#) seems to be from Bulwer-Lytton's novel. The fact that the 1892 maps show the name in a hyphenated form, exactly as Bulwer-Lytton rendered it in his novel, suggests he is its source. In addition, Bulwer-Lytton was well known and his novels very popular throughout the British Empire during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Queensland seems to be no exception, for in 1859 or 1860, the then Governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen (1821-1899), suggested 'Lytton' as the name for Brisbane's port. It also seems reasonable to assume that Ferguson Bowen and Bulwer-Lytton may have had contact with one another, given their official governmental roles at the time. The peninsula just south of the Port of Brisbane at the mouth of the Brisbane River now carries name 'Lytton', as does the near-by national park and fort. Across the river, near Brisbane Airport, lies Bulwer Island. The name 'Lytton' has also been given to a Queensland County, as well as a reef in the Great Barrier Reef north-west of Cape Melville.

*The Coming Race* must have also made an impression on the Hon. Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer K.C.M.G. (1819-1898), Premier of Queensland from 1870 to 1874, for he named his sailing yacht *Vrilya*. He raced it around Bribie Island as well as the Hamilton and Lytton Reaches of the Brisbane River.<sup>24</sup>

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The wreck of the CLS2 Carpentaria near Vrilya Point

# AND THEY ALL BEGIN WITH “THE”

Places acquire names for a variety of reasons – location, land formation, local historical event, notable personality, overseas connections.... there are any numbers of ways of naming a place. Some, however, are named for more unusual reasons.

For example, it is said that **The Risk** (a locality near Kyogle, NSW) may have been named because the original settler's wife came from an area so named, but there is another far more interesting story about its origin. John Wilson was the original settler, but it is said that the land he acquired was wanted by Mr Sparke of Roseberry Station who warned Mr Wilson not to move in. Why he should do this is not known. However, Mr Wilson took the risk and settled in the area in 1869 and wittily named his property **The Risk**. Fortunately all was well and the name now applies to the area.<sup>1</sup>

During their circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land in 1798, Lt Matthew Flinders, who commanded the *Norfolk*, and naturalist George Bass named a rocky outcrop Circular Head. This was the basalt core of an extinct volcano formed many millions of years ago. At the beginning of the twentieth century in order to build a breakwater and undertake road building, this outcrop was dynamited to obtain the rock. People flocked from afar to witness what was to be a massive explosion. A large hole was bored in the cliffs, the big fuse was lit, but the result was merely a great puff of smoke and only a small amount of rock, accompanied by a lot of dust, was shot out towards the bay. It was decreed a tough “nut” to crack and from that time on this huge basalt core has been known locally as **The Nut**.<sup>2</sup> (An alternative, though less exciting, explanation is that the hill resembles a walnut when viewed from the nearby beach.)<sup>3</sup>

A gruesome tale surrounds the rural place in NSW known as **The Murder Dog**. According to local oral history, many years ago the route was used by drovers moving stock from Nundle to Walcha and beyond. It is said that on one occasion a drover's dog would not do its job properly. The drover became enraged, took a rope and hanged the dog from a nearby tree.<sup>4</sup> A much more cheerful story lies behind **The Gurdies**, although perhaps not as straightforward. According to research carried out for the Bass Valley Historical Society, in 1838 John Thorn, who had come to Australia via Tasmania, took up a run of 16,000 acres to support 160 cattle. He named this *The Hurdy Gurdy Run* – a name which lasted until about 1907 when it was shortened to **The Gurdies**. Now this name is only retained for the creek which runs through the valley. It was thought that the name was of Scottish origin, possibly after a place alleged to be called The Gurdy near Falkirk in Scotland. However, enquiries through the relevant Scottish authorities have revealed no trace of any such name. There is, as usual, an old folk tale of a merry-go-round being bogged down in the creek, but this cannot be proven.<sup>5</sup>

Some names are descriptive of the formation's shape, for example **The Toenail** (now Toenail Point) in the Shire of Tweed, NSW, **The Monument** in Queensland and **The Bishop's Cap**, which is on a ridge at the southern end of the Nandewar Range, NSW. The latter is either a rock that has split or two adjacent rocks that, from a distance, resemble a bishop's mitre.<sup>6</sup>

**The Spectacles**, Kwinana, WA, are best viewed from the

air as they are named from the swamps in the area – Large Eye Swamp and Small Eye Swamp which were recorded in 1841 when Surveyor Thomas Watson undertook the first survey of the area. It was approved as a suburb name on 14 March, 1978.<sup>7</sup>

A map of the squatting runs of the central plain of Gippsland shows **The Heart** right in the centre. According to an account of the settling of Gippsland, the name had three possible meanings. One occurred in a story of a lost white woman which referred to a heart carved on a tree near the town of Sale, the hub of the central plain. Another suggested it may have been the name of a property in the area and a third, which sounds quite feasible, that it is a general name referring to the central area between the Latrobe and Avon rivers.<sup>8</sup>

**The Caves** in Queensland owes its name to a small tract of unspoilt bushland nearby which is dotted with karst limestone outcrops, many containing caves of various sizes. **The Word Cave**, however, has biblical connections. Located at the junction of Erskine Creek and the Nepean River, NSW, it was named by the Hall brothers – Lincoln, Duncan and Machin – whose father was a Methodist Minister. Somewhere between 1907 and 1912 the boys went into the cave by boat, camped overnight there and named it from the Biblical text at *John 1:1* “In the beginning was the Word....”<sup>9</sup>

There are two places known as **The Forks**, near Cooktown, Queensland both referring to junctions of creeks with the Annan River. Both involve a variety of names. In order to distinguish them, the junction with the Parrot Creek (also known as Pigeon Creek) is referred to as Little Forks (or locally Twin Forks), whereas the junction with the Wallaby Creek with the Annan is called **The Forks** or Nunn's Forks as the surrounding property was, in the 1880s, owned by William and Caroline Nunn who named their property Nunnville.<sup>10</sup>

Along the banks of the Goulburn River north of Ulan is an area known as **The Drip**. This name refers to the small streams that flow from the rock and cliff formations along this section of the river. A pool in the Broken River, Mackay, Queensland, is recorded officially as **The Bogle Bathing Pool**, a name which would suggest some connection with a spectre, a goblin or a scarecrow. However, it is apparently known locally as **The Bogie** and it is thought that this may be because children often used to refer to a bath as a ‘bogie’.<sup>11</sup> The Macquarie Dictionary confirms that *bogey* or *bogie* is a term that means ‘swimming hole’ or, in Aboriginal English, a ‘shower’ or ‘bath’.

Dr John Dunmore Lang throws some light on the unusual name of **The Buckets**, a range near Gloucester, NSW, in a letter written on 12th September, 1877 to Mr Alex R. Lobban. Dr Lang obviously considered it of some importance as he sent a copy to the Colonial Secretary's office. In it he says:

*I have a perfect recollection of passing and describing the range of mountains, near Gloucester called the Buccans about twenty five years ago..... The word is, I believe, an aboriginal word, but I never heard its meaning. Buckets, I have no doubt, is a mere English corruption.*

The letter was apparently a reply to an enquiry made by Mr Lobban regarding the rather unusual name **The Buckets** which, even at that early date, seems to have raised interest.<sup>12</sup>

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*The Risk Post Office, c1950 - from the collection of the National Archives of Australia: C4077*

# The Origin of Khancoban

Discovering the origin of the name 'Khancoban' was motivated by my curiosity as to the source of such an unusual duo of elements. Why would an Australian placename have an apparent Arabic/Hindi word as its first element and a rather cryptic second element?

Khancoban is a small town in the Snowy Mountains, close to the Murray River, between Thredbo and Corryong. It is 567 kilometres from Sydney and 13 kilometres from the state border with Victoria. At the 2006 census, Khancoban had a population of 281. The closest regional centre is Corryong, 20 kilometres to the west in Victoria. The original inhabitants of the region were the Jaitmathang, Djilatatang and Walgalu people. The town was built in 1960 by the Snowy Mountains Authority to house workers involved in the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Many of the towns' current inhabitants are employed by Snowy Hydro Limited working in places such as Murray 1 and Murray 2 Power Stations.

After I recently moved to the town, I took the opportunity to ask various residents about the origin of the name. Even descendants of pioneer families admitted they didn't know – the local consensus being that there had been some convicts in stone huts in the early days with an overseer named Coban. It seemed unlikely to me that convicts would have been assigned so far from the settlements at that time, and that perhaps if there were the overseer's name would have more likely been Coburn.

I then presumed that it would have been named by the original squatters who may have had a connection with India. My enquiries with one of the early owners of Khancoban Station, the Mitchells, produced no documentary evidence, even though both Elyne and Tom Mitchell had been prolific writers about the area with such books as *The Silver Brumby* series, *The Man from Snowy River*, *The Australian Alps*, *The Discoverers of the Snowy Mountains* and *Corryong and 'The Man From Snowy River' District*.

Khancoban Station became well known as a stud for Herefords, Angus, Corriedales, and 'Waler' horses, and also for its success in breeding show horses (Garryowen) and thoroughbreds, including Caulfield and Australian Cup winners. Interestingly, former owner (and Mitchell relative) Colin Chisholm's elder brother, William Malcolm, was killed at Mons in 1914, the first Australian to give his life in WW1. Both Tom Mitchell, and his father Walter, were noted for their knowledge of the local Indigenous languages, but their word lists give no mention of Khancoban amongst the many other local Aboriginal placenames.

However, a visit to the Corryong Library led me to two books which referred to the naming. In *Memoirs of a Stockman*, by Harry Peck (1942), I found: "the run, Khancoban, was first taken up by William Guise in 1838. In '48 it was held by Captain Grant and Captain Trevallyon, both Indian army officers. Colonel Colin Chisholm, the present owner, says that beyond doubt the station was named Khancoban by them. But though he made extensive inquiries in India and elsewhere, and *khan* stands for 'Royal' or 'an inn', no explanation of *coban* can be found, and it is still a mystery." (p. 320)

The second book, *Early Days of the Upper Murray*, by Jean Carmody (1981) says: "in 1848 two former officers of the Indian Army, Captain Grant and Captain Trevallyon, leased the run and it seems likely that the name Khancoban originated during their occupation. The name Khan means an inn in Iran, but is a title of respect in Pakistan and adjoining countries; no trace can be found with any certainty of the meaning of 'coban', although an interesting version claims that the name was originally 'Khancobra'" (p. 121)

A call by me to Khancoban Station itself brought to light a booklet on the history of the locally famous Waterfall Farm Fly Fishers' Club. This club was formed in 1925 by a group of professional city men (who had been fishing together since 1910 at Jindabyne) including the Chief Justice, Sir John Latham, and other eminent justices, vice-chancellors, professors and doctors. They possessed the common love for fly fishing in the then pristine Geehi and Swampy Plains Rivers that run through Khancoban and Bringenbrong Stations. Based on Harry Peck's book an article on the history of Khancoban runs: "it is widely assumed that the station was named by the Indian Army Officers

(Grant and Trevallyon) and that the name was of Indian origin. In a series of interesting articles on Khancoban Valley and the early settlers, in the Corryong Courier beginning 25<sup>th</sup> January 1978, Herb Barlee states that search failed to identify any place of that name in India. On 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1978, Tom Mitchell wrote from Towong Hill confirming this. He added that Colin Chisholm had made quite extensive enquiries and that no such place as Khancoban existed. It was suggested by an ex-Indian Army officer that as 'khan' in India can mean a home all that had to be done was to find someone named Coban.

"It was then found that an old man called Cobban had lived in a derelict hut on site at the time the Indian Army officers took over. It is a pleasing solution to a conundrum and perhaps it could be true. Perhaps the officers had intended to breed horses for the Indian Army but nothing seems to be known of them during the two years they stayed." (pp. 54-56).

Cobban and Coban seemed like strange and unlikely surnames to me but a search of the online White Pages revealed many Cobbans (and Cobbins) and a few Cobans, three of the former still residing in the district.

So, it seems that we have gone as far as we can and that the above account seems to be a reasonable and likely explanation of the origin of the name Khancoban.

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Khancoban in the Snowy Mountains near Corryong, Victoria. Photo: Jan Tent

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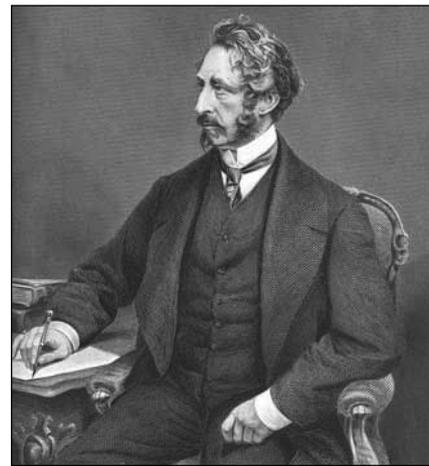
Who named the lonely and insignificant outcrop on Cape York Peninsula, **Vrilya Point**, and why, remains a mystery to me. Given the popularity of *The Coming Race* and its author, and the popular practice of adopting names for placenames from English literature (see Joyce Miles' September 2008 Newsletter article on placenames originating from Sir Walter Scott's literature), **Vrilya** most likely derives from Bulwer-Lytton's 'Vrilya'.

When I started research for this article, I envisaged a short, rather straightforward investigation and story. I should have known better. Many of my quests to discover the origin of words or placenames have resulted in searches that lasted months, if not years. It never ceases to amaze me how such research often leads to long, complicated and remarkably interesting ventures into the unknown and unexpected. The pursuit is typically so engaging, and leads to many surprising and fascinating detours, that I always regret coming to the end. It's akin to the melancholy experienced in coming to the end of a fine novel. All too often though, you come to the end of a novel and find the last page is missing – you never find out whether the butler did it or not. So, it is with the story of **Vrilya Point**.

□ Jan Tent

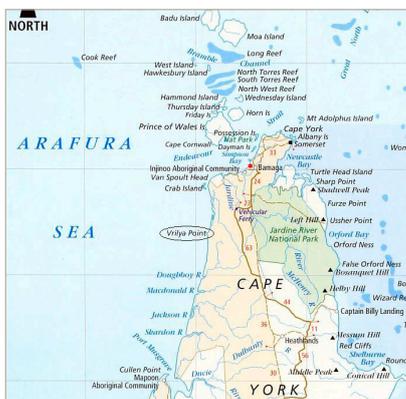
## Endnotes

- I wish to sincerely thank Graham Taylor, Senior Spatial Information Officer (Place Names Policy), Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water; and Geoff Wharton, Historian (Brisbane), for supplying me with such valuable and interesting information on Vrilya Point. Many thanks also to David Blair for his wonderful suggestions for improving this article.
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Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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**Placenames puzzle no. 31**

**The Monarchy and Nobility**

The clues reveal placenames connected with the nobility (disregard spelling)

E.g. (NSW/SA) The Duke of the rubberboot ..... Wellington

1. (VIC) She was involved in the abdication of Edward VIII
2. (VIC) Married Prince Andrew
3. (WA) He was great in the 4th century BC; opposite of depths
4. (QLD) The Princess of Denmark, agricultural establishments
5. (QLD) John Webster's came from Malfi
6. (TAS) Camilla's territory in SW England
7. (NSW) A king not renowned for his cooking ability; settlement
8. (NSW) Husband of the former Mary Donaldson, 20cwt
9. (NSW) Lady Diana before marriage
10. (NSW) William II apparently had a red complexion; waterway
11. (NSW) Husband of a Countess, large group of trees
12. (SA) She was a Bowes-Lyon before marriage
13. (NT) Between 1660 and 1952 six so-named were on the British throne; site for tents
14. (NT) Henry VIII's first wife
15. (NT) Males on the throne; very deep gorge, often with a stream
16. (ACT/SA) Robert I of Scotland who was encouraged by an arachnid
17. (VIC/WA) The Earl who was Australia's first Governor-General
18. (TAS/VIC) Jane was the third wife of Henry VIII
19. (NSW/QLD/VIC) The Queen's Scottish holiday home
20. (NSW/TAS/VIC/WA) He was Disraeli until he became an Earl

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Continued from Page 4 ...

**The Pages** are a group of rocky islets at the entrance from the east of Backstairs Passage which lies between the mainland of SA and the eastern end of Kangaroo Island. They were named in 1802 by Captain Matthew Flinders during his voyage of discovery on the *Investigator* on account, it is said, of their guiding position in this passage between Cape Jervis and Kangaroo Island. In *A Cruise in the S.S. Governor Musgrave* Thomas Gill tells of a legend in which an Aboriginal spirit creates the country to the east, the Big Murray people and the Lower Murray people, then instructs them in all the arts of life and having imparted all the knowledge they needed, swims away to create other lands. Two of his people who tried to follow him were drowned and turned into the two islands, now known as **The Pages**.<sup>13</sup>

There are dozens more names beginning with "The" – many obviously named for their formation – **The Lump, The Amphitheatre, The Camels Hump, The Deep Gully** and so on, but there are many intriguing names that almost defy explanation. Who named **The Soapy Flat, The Light Bulb,** and **The Breadknife**? Were tools made at **The Axe Factory**? Was **The Bathtub** a bathing pool? These and a host of others – **The Butter Track Pass, The Alliance, The Cats Ears, The Pepperbox, The Iron Pot, The Planks** deserve to be recorded before they disappear. But who knows their history? If anyone can help do please let us know as so far our researches have left us very puzzled?

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**Answers:** 1. Simpson 2. Ferguson 3. Alexander 4. Maryfarms 5. Duchess 6. Cornwall 7. Alfred Town 8. Frederickton 9. Spencer 10. Rufus River 11. Earwood 12. Elizabeth 13. George Camp 14. Katherine 15. Kings Canyon 16. Bruce 17. Hopetoun 18. Seymour 19. Balmoral 20. Beaconsfield

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